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Ed.
Annette Gilbert

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Contents

Publishing as Artistic Practice 6
Annette Gilbert

Some Preliminary Observations toward a Study of the Varieties of Artist Publishers in the Sixties and Seventies 40
Anne Mœglin-Delcroix

Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher: Publishing as an Alternative Artistic Practice 52
Antoine Lefebvre

How I Didn't Write Any of My Books 62
Aurélie Noury

Organic Book Design from Dwiggins to Danielewski: The Metamedial Aesthetics of Embodied Literature in American Trade Publishing 74
Alexander Starre

The Mediatization of Contemporary Writing 90
Nick Thurston

Experimental Writing in its Moment of Digital Technization: Post-Digital Literature and Print-on-Demand Publishing 100
Hannes Bajohr

Publisher, Promoter, and Genius: The Rise of Curatorial Ethos in Contemporary Literature 118
Hanna Kuusela

Inter Folia, Aves: Reading Bird Books as Curatorial-Editorial Constellations 134
Anna-Sophie Springer

Scribes, Self-Publishers, Artists: Performing the Book in the Samizdat Writing Scene 154
Valentina Parisi

No to Mass Circulation: Publishing in the Context of an Aesthetics of the Relationships in Post-Samizdat 172
Vadim Zakharov and Annette Gilbert

A Signature of Indifference 184
Lucas W. Melkane

NO-ISBN—Conceptual Perspectives on Contemporary Autonomous Publishing 190
Leo Findeisen in Conversation with Bernhard Cella

Book Swapping & Seriosity Dummies *from* Fragments: Life and Opinions of a Real Existing Artist 206
Michalis Pichler

System Test: (Self-)Critical Surveys of Publishing Practice 210
Annette Gilbert

The Social Sense of Print 226
Alessandro Ludovico

Bad Workers: Notes on the Socius and the Book 236
K. Antranik Cassem, Matt Longabucco, and Rachel Valinsky

Library Underground—A Reading List for A Coming Community 250
Eva Weinmayr

On Unpublishing: Fugitive Materiality and the Future of the Anthropocene Book 282
Paul Benzon

List of Contributors 296

Index 298

A Note on the Design 303

Publishing as Artistic Practice

Annette Gilbert

Agenda: From the Margin to the Center

While the slogan and title of the present volume "publishing as artistic practice" has not gone viral yet, the potential for it can already be felt. Its tremendous popularity in parts of contemporary art, literature, graphic design, and small/micro publishing scenes, where publishing and making books has become an essential part of a comprehensive artistic practice, suggests that it incorporates a striking critical diagnosis of the contemporary moment. In fact, it has become increasingly more frequent for the practice of authors, artists, and designers to overlap with the practice of publishers, and vice versa. It is by no means uncommon for publishing to be conceptually integrated into a work and even for publishing to be understood as an artistic project or declared as a work itself. If this were the case, then publishing would have to be understood as an artistic form of expression itself.

Given the diversity and proliferation of such works, concepts, projects, and initiatives amongst artists, authors, and graphic designers, the time is now ripe to push publishing into the center of aesthetic and academic discourses. For this reason, it is necessary to sharpen the focus and to no longer question only the significance of publishing *for* artistic practices, but to also search for the possibility and significance of publishing *as* artistic practice, just as recent artistic positions and conceptions have proposed.

From Book to Publishing

It is of primary importance to establish from the beginning that the focal point of artistic, aesthetic concerns has decidedly moved away from the debate surrounding books that has left its mark on the last two decades. As a consequence, the discussion concerning the artist's book has then progressed to a new domain as well.[1] The implications of this shift of emphasis—from medium, i.e. artifact, to practice; and from book to publishing—surface in the catchy flyer Jan Blessing and Constanze Hein designed for a workshop in February 2015 that was organized with Kristin Mueller, a workshop which, incidentally, served as the starting point for the present volume. The flyer was designed to look like a book's dust jacket [fig. 1]. But, there is no book inside, it is empty, and this fact evinces a gap, which, in turn, produces a shift in focus: away from the book and its contents, and toward the circumstances, practices, and processes of production that encompass and foster a book. As such, the flyer embodies the notion of publishing that is usually difficult to grasp. Moreover, it implicitly supplies a justification for the necessity of this shift in focus by demonstrating that a published work cannot be regarded independent of the publishing process and its determining factors. The flyer in the form of a dust jacket echoes these processes and factors and also makes them tangible. The present volume will be concerned with just this.

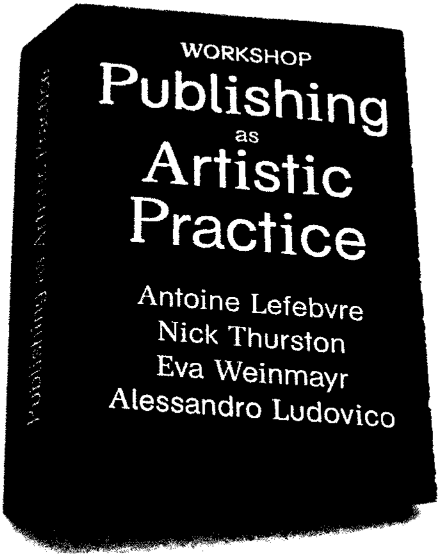

Fig. 1. Flyer for the workshop *Publishing as Artistic Practice* in Berlin, February 2, 2015, designed by Jan Blessing and Constanze Hein. Photo: Studio Pandan.

Practice Turn

On account of this shift of focus, we are now operating in the field of praxeology that has experienced a major surge in recent years as part of the interdisciplinary *practical turn* (or, *practice turn*).[2] In the social sciences (but also increasingly in philosophy, history, cultural studies, anthropology, science studies, and philology), a variety of research fields "now regularly draw on practical theoretical approaches to reconstruct the routines in businesses, the forms of using technical and medial artifacts, the characteristics of gendered 'performances' or even the 'doing culture' in everyday practices."[3]

What is common amongst them is the "emphasis on the importance of close attention to particular practices and the context within which they are located."[4] Nevertheless, it should be no surprise that the definition of practice is contentious. Following David G. Stern, we can preliminarily say that "[n]o short answer will do here. At the very least, a practice is something people do, not just once, but on a regular basis. [...] the identity of a practice depends not only on what people do, but also on the significance of those actions and the surroundings in which they occur."[5]

Andreas Reckwitz's very broad definition could also prove helpful for our discussion: "A practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood."[6] The relevance of the implicit norms that guide a practice for the practice is often underestimated: "The norms that are constitutive of these practices should not be understood in terms of sharing explicitly stated or statable beliefs or values, or in terms of conscious intentions—although these will certainly play a part from time to time—but rather as a matter of unreflectively acting in the same way as others, of doing what 'one' does."[7]

This deliberation addresses the problematic nature of researching the practices themselves: if they are "functioning," then they are barely visible and are regarded as being "self-evident" to the agent, which is why they can only be articulated and taken as an object of explicit analysis and theoretical discussion with great difficulty. Aside from the analysis of artifacts, there are laboratory studies, participant observations, interviews, and self-explanations by the agents that can also be interpreted, which is why a number of the protagonists operating in this field have the floor in the current volume.[8]

Publishing Studies

Interestingly, the first attempts to theoretically reflect upon the artistic practice of publishing originated in the artistic scene and not in academic discourse. The dissertation and artistic research projects of Delphine Bedel, Antoine Lefebvre, Bernhard Cella, and Eva Weinmayr[9] are noteworthy examples as are the works of Nick Thurston, Hannes Bajohr, and Alessandro Ludovico, all of whom are anchored both in artistic, literary fields and the academy.[10] This attempt to consolidate and cross-pollinate aesthetic and academic discourse could also be valuable for publishing studies which currently still struggles to become a distinct academic discipline.[11] After all, the fact is that publishing still "remains untheorized."[12] This applies just as well to the history of the book (or book history, as it is also called) as well as literary studies; that is, to the very disciplines who would seem to have questions of publishing within their "jurisdiction." Artists, authors, and publishers who are active in this field have recognized and lamented this lack of research. Nick Thurston, for instance, reminds us: "I think we need to recognise publishing as a specific field of practice and theory, akin to a 'discipline' in academia."[13]

Such a praxeological perspective, however, has remained considerably undeveloped in the studies scattered across numerous disciplines that take publishing as their subject. Of those key models "for analyzing the way books come into being and spread through society" that have been developed in book history, Robert Darnton's model of a "communications circuit" is of particular interest for the context of the present volume. This circuit "runs from the author to the publisher [...], the printer, the shipper, the bookseller, and the reader" and attempts to capture "each phase of this process and the process as a whole, in all its variations over space and time and in all its relations with other systems, economic, social, political, and cultural, in the surrounding environment."[14] As has been stipulated on numerous occasions, this model would have to be calibrated differently according to the selectivity, number, balance of power, and interaction between agents for earlier epochs[15] and for the present age.[16] Furthermore, Darnton has also received criticism for his preferential treatment of the *agents* and circulation of the *book* at the expense of the *processes* associated with publishing.[17]

Focusing on the impact of the publication process on the creation and constitution of a work, Jerome McGann has examined a further fundamental aspect of publishing that has remained widely neglected. Under the headline of the "sociology of texts," McGann has shown in *The Textual Condition* that the act of becoming public, of the "socialization" of the text, is necessary for it to transition from manuscript to "work."[18] Ultimately, as Lothar Müller has advocated, someone becomes "an author not by composing manuscripts, but rather when the work is circulated in print. Indeed, the concept of authorship has been explicitly bound to being printed at least since the lexicons of the seventeenth century."[19] This suggests that an author and a work only emerge in a public, "institutional" framework; or, even further, that authorship is always accompanied or indeed created by publication. As such, works are "*institutional object[s]*" in the widest sense of the term whose "existence is dependent upon the existence of a *practice*."[20]

Even when "the role of publishing as an act of mediation"[21] is often called upon, publishing's potency to facilitate and actively shape the product often remains underappreciated, if not neglected entirely. Michael Bhaskar has felt compelled to denounce the popular, but misleading conception of a book as a mere container of its contents: "publishing is active; it is not a passive matrix through which content passes but a force partially shaping and inflecting content."[22] This insight is of particular importance for literature: "If one is to establish a full understanding of the [...] relationship [between society and literature], publishing must be factored in. In the creation and dissemination of texts, publishing isn't just an afterthought. It co-constitutes texts and books."[23] Like Rachel Malik who laments that the central role publishing plays in literature has not yet been properly addressed in literary studies,[24] Bhaskar comes to the conclusion that: "Literary theory needs publishing theory."[25] This, of course, also applies to the phenomena that have emerged in the artistic field and that are discussed in the present volume.

Bhaskar has consequently proposed an ambitious attempt to theorize publishing where he raises the question "whether there could ever be unchanging integral parts" and "core activities" of the historically continuous and consistent but nevertheless changing practice of publishing. Starting from the fundamental thesis that "publishing is not necessarily to be equated with books; if anything, it is some kind of activity," Bhaskar commences with a discussion of the standard understanding of publishing as an act of "making public," which he maintains is "circular" and "inadequate" since it depends upon a vague and highly controversial concept of the public sphere that is, in contrast to other practices (such as broadcasting and posting), not specific enough. That's why he suggests "limning a working definition of publishing within the boundaries between public and private is impossible." In contrast to this, Bhaskar suggests that in conjunction with the contents, which are a prerequisite for publishing, the practices of filtering and amplification are the core of publishing. If we take filtering as the traditional gatekeeper function, then amplification means acting such "that more copies of a work or product are distributed or consumed": "Thus, simply leaving a manuscript on a bench is not amplifying it in the way photocopying and posting it to all your neighbours is amplifying it."[26]

This model of publishing is supplemented by two further components: "Filtering and amplification occur *through* frames *according* to models." While the frames capture the "presentational or performative aspect" ("they don't just deliver a work but deliver it in a certain way"), the models encompass the "interplay of causal factors, goals, motivations and ideological underpinnings [that] shapes and provides the *raison d'être* for content." Accordingly, Bhaskar concludes that publishers are "not just producers of books but filters for content and constructors of amplificatory frames."

Bhaskar's four-tiered publishing model, in which every element "elaborately and inseparably intertwines in practice,"[27] exhibits a certain proximity to Rachel Malik's strict praxeological perspective. She defines publishing as "a set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational, political, cultural, and, perhaps, above all, other media."[28] The constellation of these variables that is always unique constitutes "the various horizons of the publishable which govern what it is thinkable to publish within a particular historical moment."[29] With this in mind, it has become necessary for further studies to systematically and historically untangle this set of factors and their relationships to one another, together with their respective horizons, which is what the present volume aims to provide as a preliminary dossier in its focus on a specific practice of publishing.

Publishing as Artistic Practice

Thus, to understand and analyze a practice itself, we are confronted with fundamentally complex interrelationships—and this is even more complicated when, as is the case with "publishing as artistic practice," this practice is by definition situated at the intersection of *two* established practices, namely, publishing and art.

This picture becomes even more colorful when we include a further practice that is closely associated with publishing, namely, the literary practice. This inclusion is legitimate given that the publishing practice's configuration, which abides by certain aesthetic premises, is not restricted to (visual) artists in the narrow sense of the word. The present volume is more concerned with opening the discussion beyond the limits of fine arts in order to do justice to the growing interest in publishing from inside of the literary field as well as to the growing trend that aims to dissolve the boundaries between different art forms.[30]

Seeing as the basic manifestation of literature is a publication—in fact, leaving aside oral or performative modes, it is *the* form of literature's existence par excellence—literary authors and literary studies exhibit a mature experience in the matter of publishing. The experimental literary scene is particularly interesting in this context since it demonstrates a strong "tendency to conflate writing and publishing."[31] This can be clearly seen, for instance, in post-digital literature since it, according to → Hannes Bajohr in this volume, owes its existence to a very specific constellation of publishing technologies, dissemination strategies, and textual genre. But this tendency can also be found in certain forms of Conceptual writing that are distinguished by "an approach to making language public that is performed by choreographing a specific intersection of the practices and institutions of publishing."[32] Forms of Appropriation literature could also be mentioned, which → Hanna Kuusela analyzes in her contribution and which → Aurélie Noury uses as the basis for her Éditions Lorem Ipsum. These can be labeled as a "kind of writing through publishing."[33]

There is yet a further practice that overlaps with publishing that must be taken into consideration: namely, graphic design, which, according to → Alexander Starre, is "the missing link between visual art and literature." In a united polemic against the practice of industrially mass-producing printed matter, the graphic design scene has recently made an assertive claim for the artistic ambitions of their practice and their products. In surveys of contemporary production, there is often talk of "today's unprecedented experimentation with the creation of book design as *artistic* objects."[34] Although the designers naturally focus more on the book itself, there are nevertheless increasing attempts to incorporate the newly emerging design concepts of the (post-)digital age into a comprehensive analysis of the whole practice and process of publishing. Craig Mod, for instance, proposes that "we need to start thinking differently about what books *are* and how they are produced. [...] we need to reconsider the whole approach to the process of making a book into the thing it is: the creation, the consumption, and everything that happens around and in between."[35]

As such, "publishing as artistic practice" spans a complex field of practices marked by countless patterns, interdependencies, and nested hierarchies—without even drawing the associated practices of economics, law, politics, etc. into the discussion here. Likewise, the intricate "question of whether there is some sort of hierarchy among cultural practices, and whether and how some cultural practices organize, anchor, or constrain others"[36] must also remain unanswered for the time being. In any case, from a praxeological point of view, it is a formidably complex mélange of practices that have been grouped together under the aegis of "publishing as artistic practice" and it is this which the present volume takes as its subject matter.

Somehow Different

Keeping this in mind, we can now pose the real question at hand: In what sense can publishing be said to be an artistic practice? As → Anne Mœglin-Delcroix has established in her attempt to formulate an answer to this question in the present volume, it will not suffice to ascribe this form of artistic publishing solely to "the social or professional identity of the person who undertakes this project." This is because it would only say something about embedding the protagonists in a certain field and not about the specific characteristics of the practice itself, which might justify calling it a decidedly unique artistic practice and/or category of publishing.

At first glance the aforementioned slogan seems as if it wants to simply widen the abundant variety of forms of artistic expressions and to establish and shape publishing and making books as an artistic practice that has its own right to existence in the art world with the potential corollary of ennobling the publishing practice in turn. But there is another agenda that often reverberates within the slogan: the implicit conviction that these artistic forms of publishing—no matter how they are to be defined—are categorically different from the standard art practice and its framing conditions, and, further, that they could be liberating and indeed revolutionary for such conditions. One often speaks of "publishing as an *alternative* artistic practice" in this context. This thought arises in a programmatic form in → Antoine Lefebvre's description of his own practice, for instance, where he considers himself to be an artist-entrepreneur and purposefully situates his publishing house—company and artwork at once—between these worlds:

> "This practice is alternative, or other, insofar as it represents an alternative to the usual mode of operation dominating the art world: it is both an alternative space for art; a new place for it to develop differently; but also an alternative to the art market as it develops in the book market."[37]

As → Anne Mœglin-Delcroix and → Antoine Lefebvre have shown in their contributions, the contemporary movement displays a remarkable proximity to the publishing as artistic practice discourse that developed with the artist's book and artist publisher in the 1960s and 70s. Then, artists favored the book as a medium because, for them, the art industry and market was inadequate. As such, they searched for alternative spaces and practices to make art, and this was ossified in slogans such as "The Page as Alternative

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Space."[38] Their understanding of themselves as "different" and "alternative" was echoed in the names they christened their presses with, such as Something Else Press (Dick Higgins) or Other Books and So (Ulises Carrión), something which is carried on to this day in the appellation of presses like Unpublishable Series (UbuWeb), Edizioni Periferia, and Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't fail to recognize that aspirations and reality easily drift apart—at least for contemporary presses, just as → Michalis Pichler demonstrates with the phenomenon he calls seriosity dummies. These dummies are symptomatic of the corruption of the scene's ideals since they can be used to achieve clear profits of distinction and can accumulate symbolic capital. According to → Michalis Pichler, even the practice of bookswapping is increasingly infiltrated by the market logic of capitalism. In any case, one should keep Ulises Carrión in mind, who already denounced the "total ignorance on the part of the artists of the traditional book world that, in its 500-year history (I'm talking here about printed books), has developed with market mechanisms and a celebrity syndrome similar to those that typically oppress the art world" and who described the "unlimited optimism" that "books would allow artists to liberate themselves from galleries and art critics" as a great "misunderstanding": "I would like to ask, what for? To fall into the hands of publishers and book critics!"[39]

It is not the case that artistic publishing practices are only conceptualized as an alternative to the art world. Sometimes they are also taken as an explicit alternative to the established models of the publishing world when, for instance, there is talk of "independent publishing as artistic practice" or when a small press is defined "as an artistic, political and social alternative to mainstream publishing."[40] The question is not only whether such a practice can always live up to its promise but also whether the underlying binary it establishes can be postulated at all. For, just as there is no *one* mainstream (the field of publishing fragments into many diverse models and categories of publishing that operate on entirely divergent premises, business models, and forms of organization, as one can see in the differences between trade and academic publishing as well as the POD industry), one cannot speak of *the* small press as *the* alternative. In fact, even important artist publishers rely on proven models of the publishing world, which is what → Anne Mœglin-Delcroix has shown with the examples of Something Else Press, which acts like a wolf in sheep's clothing and mimics trade book publishing, and Coracle Press, which pays service to the rather elitist tradition of the artisanal private presses. What we can say is truly alternative here is at best the offbeat, non-mainstream contents or design of the books, and the ambitions of these small presses; but it is decidedly not the publishing practice or business model as such.

The same could be said about contemporary publishing projects. Many of those that are conceived as decisively alternative to the "mainstream"—and which, for instance, forgo ISBNs or being materialized in print, are distributed solely on the internet, facilitate DIY prints on home printers, make use of uncommon printing techniques or design concepts, exploit POD, follow the self-publishing model, or are created manually—may at first glance seem to be "alternative" or "new" in comparison to traditional publishing models but they never result in a fundamentally new way of publishing. All of these tactics have been or are being explored in "mainstream" publishing too, which, as we know, is facing radical changes to the industry and is feverously searching for new ways to subsist. As a consequence they have demonstrated an imposed willingness to experiment. This has meant that a number of concepts originating in the independent scene are being readily incorporated into the "mainstream" at an ever increasing pace.[41]

Alternatives to "mainstream" publishing have also been widely discussed in the experimental literary field. For the most part, this stance feeds off the experience of marginalization, i.e. off the position of being virtually forced to be an outsider since experimental, avant-garde literature finds little acceptance in the literary world. The art world has then offered a harbor that not a few literati have emigrated to and which, at present, willingly grants asylum to experimental literature.[42] But since literature is primarily manifested in publications and practically no alternative to publishing results from this, a long tradition of publishing projects and self-publishing ventures that a number of protagonists in the contemporary literary scene identify with[43] has become an essentially important back route in the literary field. This particular legacy that has birthed a wealth of innovative publishing strategies should also prove useful for the contemporary discussion regarding publishing as artistic practice, which distinguishes between ventures that prioritize publishing unconventional contents or ways of writing and those that desire to alter the publishing practice itself, believing that it is important "to produce a different kind of publishable text and a different culture of publication [...] from outside the mainstream as a positive choice."[44]

This specificity and otherness of the artistic practice of publishing should be clarified in the following based on the contributions collected in this volume and on the phenomena they discuss, since they spotlight and sketch some of the emerging trends and significance of this practice—albeit in a necessarily provisional and incomplete manner.

Artistic Autonomy, or: Publishing as Maker Culture

Like in the avant-garde's book art and the artist's book movement of the 1960s and 70s (→ Anne Mœglin-Delcroix), the idea of artistic freedom and autonomy is of prime importance to the contemporary artistic publishing scene. This is concerned less with being independent from institutions, commerce, and the market than it is with structuring the publishing process and its framing conditions as well as with expanding the exceptionally large artistic spectrum for creative leeway regarding content, design, material, and printing techniques of the publications—whether they are low-tech, DIY, hand-pressed prints, bulk print runs, POD products, or digital publications. The active engagement especially of the visual arts with regards to the *making* of books is encouraged, indeed, incited by the fact that "publishing is and always has been a 'maker culture'" that looks back on a "long craft tradition of printers and publishers."[45] As such, it answers the "longing for the 'humanization of digital technologies'" and the "increasing ennoblement of the thing in art, theory, and everyday life" that, according to → Hannes Bajohr, are characteristic of the post-digital age and its discourse.

This element of artistic autonomy for every essential aspect of a publication has become increasingly important in the literary context as well. Authors are progressively no longer satisfied with simply writing texts and they no longer consider the design of texts and books as a contingent factor but rather as properties that constitute their work. Contrary to the traditional conception of a literary work that reduces it to the text—in the sense of an abstract, linguistic structure—the designing of a text and a book has become an essential part of the author's creative activity that is as valuable as the writing itself. Questions of design are thus no longer held to be the responsibility of the publisher; rather, they are subjected to one's own authorship. The Polish artist Zenon Fajfer and the literary scholar Katarzyna Bazarnik have created the neologism "liberature" in order to describe this "literature in the form of a book." It shifts the emphasis from "litera" (lat.: letter) to "liber" (lat.: book): "the material book, which can be of any shape and structure, ceases to be a neutral container for a text, but becomes an integral component of the literary work."[46]

This, of course, is not an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. There have always been literary authors who have pursued a holistic "liberatic approach," such as Laurence Sterne, Rétif de la Bretonne, William Blake, Raymond Queneau, William H. Gass, B. S. Johnson, and Raymond Federman. This "type of literary artist, who transgresses the border between writing and designing" can no longer be embedded only in the category of experimental authors. As → Alexander Starre illustrates in his contribution, they can increasingly be found even in "mainstream" trade publishing. The books of Mark Z. Danielewski, who tells his stories not only *in* a book but *with* the book, for instance, are the "collaborative product of a 'bibliographic [i.e.: liberatic] author'[47] and a design-oriented trade book publisher."

Reproduction as Production, or: Writing Books Rather Than Just Texts

But there are other authors who go a step further. Not content with the expansion of artistic freedom in designing texts and books, they strive to revise the entire publishing process, including all of its agents and responsibilities. In this spirit, the book artist and author Ulises Carrión already defined "the new art of making books" in 1975:

> "In the old art the writer judges himself as being not responsible for the real book. He writes the text. The rest is done by the servants, the artisans, the workers, the others.
>
> [...] In the new art the writer assumes the responsibility for the whole process."[48]

The notion of "taking over the responsibility for" is symptomatic of this debate. Based on this idea, Nick Thurston has developed a new publishing model that he understands as having been realized to some extent in Conceptual writing since the concern there is never just with the text. Rather, "the 'author' take[s] responsibility for the full object-status of the reproduced cultural object."[49] In this context, Thurston holds the publisher to be responsible for enabling "a certain kind of unconventional but highly-literate writer to write books rather than just texts."[50]

Echoing Ulises Carrión's almost identical dictum from 1975 that "In the old art the writer writes texts. / In the new art the writer makes books,"[51] Thurston's slogan, which, according to → Antoine Lefebvre, had already been shaped by Stéphane Mallarmé,[52] fundamentally contradicts the traditional conception of literary work as well as the traditional yet still powerful paradigm regarding the division of labor in the field of publishing, which Roger Chartier has famously formulated as such: "authors do not write books; they write texts that become material objects."[53] The long-established "industry model" of publishing that → Nick Thurston illustrates with the formula "production-then-reproduction"[54] is based upon this strict division of authorial text production and the publisher's subsequent production of the books. Whereas the text production phase has positive connotations arising from the emphasis on the creativity and originality of the author in the commonplace understanding, the following phase of manufacturing and publishing books is viewed as a purely mechanical reproduction of a given text in which others take over and "nothing essential" is added to the work.[55]

An alternative model that is currently being investigated with great enthusiasm by the experimental literary scene can be said to follow → Nick Thurston's corresponding formula "reproduction-as-production." Here, the attempt is to break up the logic of production and reproduction that was outlined above; or, to even reverse it by "re-conceptualiz[ing] reproduction as a form of production" and by increasing its value "as a creative act" equal to writing so that it loses its subsequent, secondary character. This is in accordance with Rachel Malik's plea to move away from the sharp distinction between production and reproduction and to no longer privilege the writing process but to see it as one process amongst many in publishing: "Writing is not opposed to publishing: composition is one of its processes."[56]

Furthermore, shifting the logic from "production-then-reproduction" to "reproduction-as-production" not only inverts the order, it also changes the temporality. The two processes are no longer sequenced as stages but are collapsed into a simultaneous process: these days, "writing and publishing are [often] the same action," as → Nick Thurston states.

"Reproduction-as-production" would then suggest a practice of publishing that admits that "the artwork only legitimately 'becomes' whatever it is as an artwork in its being reproduced and having a reproduced form."[57] This would mean that authors "implicate the processes of reproduction in the conscious processes of artistic production (a.k.a. composition)"[58] and that the authorial responsibility is for the entire process and result.

Publishing as Site-Specific Gesture and Critical Intervention

On this basis, Nick Thurston has developed "an approach to writing by which someone composes or choreographs how the practices and institutions at the intersection will affectively inter-relate. This would involve nominating the resultant text plus its contexts of production, distribution and reception as altogether the stuff to be read."[59]

This approach has been implemented for instance in Thurston's recent work *Of the Subcontract. Or, Principles of Poetic Right* (2013), which is discussed by him and → Hanna Kuusela in their contributions. The poems in that book were all written by ghostwriters contracted through Amazon's subsidiary Mechanical Turk (AMT). Every poem is accompanied by information regarding the number of minutes the unnamed contracted laborer invested in the poem as well as what Thurston paid for it—anywhere between 1 cent and 1 dollar. As such, the extraordinarily topical socio-economic dimensions of outsourcing, i.e. the precarious post-industrial work and production conditions in general, become a central theme of the book and are then given a trial run in the field of poetry, which is typically seen as being the most authentic genre and the least corrupted or furthest away from the concerns of the market—yet, following Ulises Carrión (see above) and Vanessa Place,[60] this view is erroneous. *Of the Subcontract* thus presents itself as a space where literary, publishing, and curatorial practices come into contact with the discourses and institutions from the economic, social, political, and ethical realms. The publication is then "a material representation of the textual and contextual processes that were choreographed to intersect […] in specific editions, at specific times, each projected into a specific historico-socio-cultural milieu."[61]

Thurston considers this form of conscious positioning of the intersecting practices and institutions of publishing as a "site-specific gesture," or, as a "site-specific intervention."[62] Whereas the exhibition, gallery, and museum were regarded—mostly from an institutionally critical perspective—as the "site" in the site-specific art of the 1970s, it is the publication that needs to be established and critically investigated as the "site" in the literary field,[63] which is what Fritz Balthaus has stipulated with his intervention in Brian O'Doherty's collection of texts *Inside the White Cube* (→ Annette Gilbert) as being long overdue.

This site-specific and (institutional) critical impetus can also be accredited to every post-digital work "that takes as its topic the structural, socioeconomic, and material conditions of its production." In his contribution, → Hannes Bajohr classifies such works as "factographic." However, the focal point here is not only the precarious working conditions of today's artistic production, which Holly Melgard, for instance, has addressed in her *Reimbur$ement* (2013): "often I find myself paying to work rather than being paid for work."[64] It is also the many shortcomings of the POD system that have been subject to criticism, as → Hannes Bajohr and → Annette Gilbert have shown in their contributions. In the works of Silvio Lorusso and Jean Keller, for instance, both the POD and the exaltation of this system, which has been praised as a refuge for freedom and democracy, have been demystified. Lorusso's and Keller's works suggest that in the general enthusiasm for the virtually unlimited artistic freedom in the field of POD publishing it shouldn't be forgotten that even a predominantly autonomous author or self-publisher is imposed by boundaries that are determined by the medium, material, technology, economic relations of production, and institutional and legal regulations.

Elisabeth Tonnard and Klaus Scherübel, for instance, have made these institutional conditions and dependencies on the publishing system the subject of their publishing projects: Tonnard's *The Invisible Book* (2012) is a book that was never written or printed but it can still be purchased and is considered to be "produced" or "published"; and Scherübel's *Mallarmé. The Book* (2000–), which consists solely of a cover and a Styrofoam block, can be found in libraries and bookstores, since it is furnished with an ISBN and has been fed into the institutional and book trade distribution. Elisabeth Tonnard and Klaus Scherübel focus their entire efforts on the framing conditions of publishing and demonstrate that it is entirely feasible to bring an invisible or blank "book" into economic and institutional circulation so long as it has been institutionally "accredited." In this way, according to → Annette Gilbert, they reveal the "externalities" of the publication process and the powers that bring the publications into existence, which normally remain invisible.

Publishing as an Act of Creation, or: Writing through Publishing

→ Aurélie Noury, who has not "written" a single book for her Éditions Lorem Ipsum, also relies on the productive powers of the publishing process that are integral to the work. As the provocative title of her contribution to this volume proclaims, she searches for those rare cases in fiction that deal with fictitious writers and their works, which, in turn, are described in such great detail in the fictional text that, for all intents and purposes, they already exist in completion and are virtually ready to go to print. Aurélie Noury disconnects these texts that have hitherto lacked independence from their respective narrative contexts and re-publishes them as separate, autonomous volumes authored by the fictitious writer. Éditions Lorem Ipsum's books celebrate "publishing as an act of creation" (→ Aurélie Noury), thereby taking the formula "reproduction-as-production" very seriously.

The publishing strategy of many of the works that → Hannes Bajohr discusses in his contribution on post-digital literature is similar to this but so too are the web-to-print projects that Paul Soulellis assembles in his *Library of the Printed Web* (2013–). The publications presented there are grouped under the heading "search, compile, publish" and are also based on foreign, i.e. found, material. Using diverse artistic strategies (Soulellis makes a distinction between grabbing, hunting, scraping, and performing), the artist / author collects found material from the web, generates, searches, organizes, designs, and finally publishes it in print.

In light of this, the formula "reproduction-as-production" gains a further shading. Up until now it has only been used to describe an inclusion of the amplification and publishing ("reproduction") phases in the author's creative process ("production"). Now, however, the formula can also refer to the publication's fabrication phase of content ("production"), which is turned on its head by the projects described here since the published contents are no longer originally created ("production") but are taken from available sources and copied ("reproduction"). Copying and reproducing found materials, then, could be perceived as a widely accepted method of creative production that would align with the formula "reproduction-as-production." The tendency to supplement or even replace the writing of new, original texts, which has dominated the core of creativity and literary production to this date, with other activities (such as copying, appropriating, compiling, downloading, remixing, crowdsourcing, and the programming of algorithms) that are principally of the same value has been recently turned into a slogan by Kenneth Goldsmith: "The future of writing is not writing."[65] One very productive form of "not writing," and the projects discussed above attest to this, is publishing. With Nick Thurston, one could speak of "a kind of writing through publishing."[66]

Editorial and Curatorial Practices

The aforementioned tendency to work with found materials is closely related to the increasing convergence between publishing and curatorial practices, which has been documented as a further trend in the context of publishing as artistic practice by → Anna-Sophie Springer and → Hanna Kuusela in their contributions. That the "curatorial ethos" has found its way into the publishing practice should be no surprise since curating has taken over in almost all realms of life (from fashion and collections to magazines and online platforms). Dorothea von Hantelmann speaks of "the curatorial paradigm" that shapes our post-industrial and post-material consumer society: "the skill—or, if you will, the 'art'—of choosing has become a cultural practice in its own right."[67] The core of curation is this very art of selecting, which includes its capability of ascribing meaning to the selection.

If the curatorial practice was previously at home in the exhibition business of museums and galleries, and has in the meantime ascended to its own *artistic* activity in those fields, it can now also be found in "the 'paginated' realm of reproductions—the world of books and libraries." → Anna-Sophie Springer demonstrates this kind of "curatorial space" in her contribution about books on birds: "for those asking how publishing and the curatorial relate and intersect, natural history books open up unique pathways beyond art history."

In the literary field one can also discern that an increasing number of agents understand their literary or editorial practice as curatorial and/or label them as such. In one of his most recent aphorisms, Kenneth Goldsmith thus postulates that "Choice is authorship. Legitimate authorship."[68] This is seconded in the "blurb" to his *Theory*, which is not arbitrarily organized as a loose-leaf collection, where it is stated that it is "*curated* by the author-poet."[69]

One can take a critical stance to this current fashion. Nevertheless, it is unmistakable that the curatorial practice and the publishing practice, especially the editorial practice, do indeed have a large overlap: processes of selection, organizing, arranging, putting into relationship, and presentation of materials represent the core of curation as well as publishing, i.e. editing.[70] As previously mentioned, Michael Bhaskar also counts filtering as being one of the four basic components of publishing practice and affirms that "curation competencies lie within the ambit of publishing speciality," whereby the very recent influence of curating has set a new tone: "Filtering is slowly shifting from a selection emphasis to a curation emphasis." The difference between them, however, is that curation "is less about commissioning, more about combining; less about origination and binary choice deliberations, more about arrangement and patterning." It could be that the key to the future of publishing lies within the curatorial approach: "Part of why curation is so valuable to the future of publishing is that almost by definition it cannot be totally mechanized. [...] Yet curation isn't just about efficiency; it's also about personal taste, an individual's style and judgment. Curation has value precisely because of its fuzziness, its ability to surprise with a flash of insight."[71]

In contrast to this, → Hanna Kuusela takes a critical view on the emergence of curatorial practice in the literary field since it strengthens the culture of (self-)promotion. In their drive for recognition and authorship, the literary curators—in contrast to the traditionally rather withdrawn understanding of a publisher or editor's role—"not only make public others' texts but also seek [visibility and] publicity for their *own* practices, and thus accumulate and create cultural capital for themselves." This can be seen particularly in the appropriating and participatory forms of literature that are based on the use of foreign texts. Originality is not proclaimed for the published contents but rather for the idea of the project and the collation, frame and presentation of the foreign contents. → Hanna Kuusela fears that this profiling of the publisher or editor as a curator threatens to be at the expense of authors whose texts—whether they consent or not—are used in the curator's project: "the praxis of curating is also, or above all, an act of reterritorialization, i.e., an act of designing a new power." This is shown in Nick Thurston's *Of the Subcontract*, which, according to → Hanna Kuusela, critically reveals "how the relationship between the (multiple) producers of the text and the (individual) literary curator" can take on ethically dubious and exploitative traits "when taken to the extreme," but it cannot escape the dilemma that "[p]oets and professors can point to this change, but so far, have not been able to move beyond it."[72]

Publishing and the Public Sphere, or: Publishing as a Political Issue

In a very programmatic text that is often invoked in the publishing as artistic practice discourse, Matthew Stadler, a co-founder of Publication Studio, refers to the publication of a text as "a political act [...], which creates a political space called public space."[73] The established connection between politics, the public sphere, and publishing is not a matter of chance. From a media history perspective, the concept of the modern public sphere is in fact strongly related to the practice of publishing since it was print that led to the "invention" of the modern public sphere. A new "media constellation" resulted from the printing press, and subsequently writing had two different media to choose from: "this alternative enabled and forced a functional differentiation, in the course of which both the manuscript as well as print took on new cultural and textual tasks." Since then, the connotation of handwriting is usually associated with the private sphere and something that has remained unfinished and the printed text is associated with the public sphere and something that has been brought to completion. Printing grants a text "a higher quality and dignity" and because of the enlarged public sphere that it reaches, it also has a larger political "'explosive power.'"[74] It can be said, then, that "the printed word" has become "the core of the modern public sphere."[75]

This is the reason why publishing quickly becomes a political issue. But it also explains why any restriction on this public sphere receives a highly sensitive reaction: "Books need to circulate to have an impact by being read. [...] Owning a book is fine but it still needs to be accessible" (→ Eva Weinmayr). As such, the diverse "ways to suppress the publishing of, the access to, or the distribution of texts and books" are closely followed by the arts and literature and, as → Eva Weinmayr documents, any form of suppression arouses opposition and "creative subversion" by the activists in the scene. Thus, contemporary artistic interventions are clearly rooted in the tradition of counterculture that ranges from the *Whole Earth Catalog*, the *Revolting Librarians*, and the "sozialisierter Druck" (pirate edition) of the student movement. Focusing on samizdat, → Valentina Parisi considers it to be a similar kind of self-publishing practice to those in the counterculture tradition.

In the contemporary "age of access"[76] it is no longer the censors or the ideologically prejudiced acquisition and cataloging policies of libraries but rather the copyright restrictions, the market power of individual companies and the regulation of access that the activists amongst the artists and poets protest. In this context, → Hanna Kuusela and → Alessandro Ludovico are reminded of Aaron Swartz, whose "brave act of freeing the copyrighted academic knowledge of JSTOR" has been reflected upon in numerous art projects. As a further example, → Eva Weinmayr takes on Alessandro Ludovico's own hacker project *Amazon Noir – The Big Book Crime* that was realized with UBERMORGEN.COM and Paolo Cirio, which utilizes the "look inside" function of Amazon to acquire complete books from the online seller's website by using a "robot-perversion-technology" and to then distribute them across a variety of channels. → Nick Thurston expresses his anxiety about the contemporary surveillance technologies, which practically disintegrate the difference between writing on a computer and making something public since everything can immediately be edited and read by others without the writer ever knowing the better. It is not a stretch, then, to make the prognosis that the problems of availability, access, and control will remain dominating themes in society and in the artistic publishing scene in the coming years.

Publishing as Creating a Public and/or Forming a Community

Although the "printed word" has become "the core of the modern public sphere"[77] and some form of the public sphere is already included in printing due to the nature of the medium, the concept of the public sphere remains highly problematic in its connection to publishing. On the one hand, the public sphere in general is "a remarkably flabby historical concept"[78] that is, in addition to this, normatively charged as a concept of democratic theory. On the other hand, there is no consensus as to whether this is even a sensible criteria for defining publishing. Nor has it been definitively decided as to what "to make/to be public" should mean in this context: Is the principal notion of the public sphere that is associated with publishing decisive or does it merely depend on the actual number of copies printed? Is it crucial that the publication is in principle accessible to everyone or just that it, in some form, circulates? "[O]r is it epistemological, the state of being *known*, or even being known to have been published?"[79] Whether the public sphere that the publication is intended for already exists or whether the publication creates it is another question that could be raised.

In the discourse surrounding publishing as artistic practice, the tendency has been to adopt the latter position, or at least to make an explicit differentiation between "making public" and "making a public." In his attempt to distinguish posting from publishing, Paul Soulellis has defined them as such: "Posting is usually 'making public,' but publishing is making 'a public' by creating a space for the circulation of discourse."[80] Matthew Stadler from Publishing Studio supports this when he suggests that publishing is "not just the production of books, but the production of a public. This public [...] is created through physical production, digital circulation, and social gathering. Together these construct a space of conversation which beckons a public into being."[81] It is noticeable that the first statement suggests a public being created *for* the circulation of discourse while the second is more concerned with a public being created *by* publication. This, however, is not necessarily a contradiction. Publication is governed by a dual movement or circuit, something which squares with Bhaskar's observation that "growing from a society is only one part of a loop, which also includes how publishing helps produce societies."[82]

Due to the complexity of the related questions and the shaky concept of the public sphere, this "social nexus" is often bracketed out of academic discourse[83] although it plays a central role in the discussions concerning publishing as artistic practice. Very frequently, the idea of making a public through publishing is connected with the concept of a scene or community that is conceived of as a limited, yet in principle accessible, open public sphere.[84] As a rationale for his artistic research with NO-ISBN publications, → Bernhard Cella, for instance, holds that "[w]ithin communities, creating and stabilizing a collective identity is one of the main reasons for publishing."[85] Eva Weinmayr affirms this strong connection and has headed her artistic practice with a quotation by André Breton: "One publishes to find comrades."[86]

The idea of publishing as a collective, community forming, or strengthening process affects the publication's production phase as much as its reception. Based on the awareness that publishing necessarily constitutes a "concerted speech act"[87] that includes a number of agents, a model for a publishing community can be developed where a publication is produced in an act of collective productivity and creativity. One expression of this is the typical organization and self-portrayal of contemporary publishing houses and projects as production *collectives*. → Hannes Bajohr has given a depiction of this with the examples of the "publishing collective" Troll Thread as well as his own "text collective" 0x0a. The community shaping aspect of publishing also applies to the processes and practice of post-production. Special modes of circulation have been developed as a means to create community. The practice of bookswapping that → Michalis Pichler describes as well as the social library initiatives and sharing platform projects that → Alessandro Ludovico and → Eva Weinmayr discuss are two examples.

The places where the communities can organize, network, exchange, consolidate, and develop are of increasing importance.[88] These could be the rooms of production, as is the case in the print stores of Publication Studio, the rooms of trade, like the currently mushrooming micro fairs (→ Bernhard Cella and → Michalis Pichler), but also the rooms of reception, like Wendy's Subway, which is a library, reading room, and workspace, which cultivates a "social relationship of reading." The ability of this space to facilitate community and discourse is documented by → Rachel Valinsky, K. Antranik Cassem, and Matt Longabucco in their contribution, in which they take the opportunity to collectively write a text. In this sense, their tri-vocal contribution reflects upon and puts to the test "publishing's sociality as a form of artistic practice."

(Private) Publishing in a Personal Network of Relationships

One extreme of such community specific publishing takes place when the intended public is limited to a very small, almost private circle from its inception. This form of publishing within a limited public sphere that was familiar in earlier cultures of sociability such as the scholarly circles of the early modern age or literary circles of friends and literary salons is discussed in the current volume in conjunction with samizdat publications (→ Vadim Zakharov, → Valentina Parisi) and NO-ISBN publications (→ Bernhard Cella). These publications derive from an environment of intimate communication that is based on personal acquaintances. Usually passed from hand to hand, they circulate "outside of the 'anonymous' public sphere, namely in a restricted circle of tendentially reciprocally communicating 'friends.'"[89] In this sense, → Vadim Zakharov has also explicitly identified the samizdat publications as "token[s] of friendship" and as a continuation of the typical studio and kitchen conversations that took place during those years. This form of publishing practice that is primarily focused on the human relationships contains an aspect of authenticity and trust that would be lost in addressing an anonymous public sphere, which is why → Vadim Zakharov adhered to this format even long after Perestroika.

By embedding production, circulation, and reception in a personal network of relationships, the publications that appear in a minimal number of copies—regardless of whether they are circulated as a manuscript, typescript, private printing, or POD—have the private nature of a manuscript or letter.[90] This has implications for the status of the work since this is constrained by the socialization of the text. Following Jerome McGann (see above), a text becomes a work as a result of its publication. Furthermore, there is also a difference between unprinted, "private" manuscripts and the "public" printed page with regards to the aesthetic judgment of the work's status: in contrast to the published text, which is seen as being complete, a manuscript is considered to be "unfinished," and regarded as being a mere draft.[91]

This lesser status is mirrored in the general neglect or even contempt of manuscript books and private printings in the history of literature, books, and libraries as well as in its special treatment it receives from the law. The conditions under which a publication has legal implications are not yet in force with a manuscript. In Germany, for instance, a publication that is marked with "printed as a manuscript," can rely on the fact that "a publishing of the work in the sense of a public notification hasn't been achieved, which is why it is forbidden to cite such a text,"[92] or to duplicate, discuss in a critique, or otherwise make use of it.

Interestingly, the limited medial, legal, and aesthetic status of such private publications doesn't apply to the samizdat culture. Regardless of the limited print run and extremely limited circulation, samizdat was understood by all of its members (as well as by the state) as a *publishing* model and their texts were normally granted the status of a publication and work. As → Vadim Zakharov explains, there was an unspoken agreement: "As soon as we completed the five copies and brought them into circulation, they were, for us, finished and released, that is, published." Following → Valentina Parisi, one could speak of an "increasing institutionalization of self-publishing in the 1970s."

The act of circulation is crucial here. As such, this verifies Bhaskar's thesis that the number of copies published does not determine its public nature: "Scale, while not irrelevant, neither constitutes nor invalidates amplification. Amplification has various degrees and criteria for success, dependent on the model being used. At a conceptual extreme, the idea of amplification says that even if only one more copy is encountered than otherwise, then we have amplification; we have publishing."[93]

That the samizdat transcripts were associated with a definite status of publication is also reflected in → Valentina Parisi's findings that a surprising number of writers sought to give their hand or typewritten products the appearance of being a *book* by making them look like printed matter, especially by using typical paratextual elements such as a title page, publisher logo, and imprint. This was done also by faithfully imitating the text's setting and typography. → Valentina Parisi classifies this "kind of mimicry" as "samizdat reprints."

It is equally astonishing that "a samizdat copyright" has emerged that prohibits the reproduction of the samizdat editions without the author's consent. Claiming the copyright for a work aims at strengthening the position of the author and wielding a form of work authority especially in anonymous communication situations where the author loses the direct control over his work, as in the case of print publications, which address a wider audience that is not personally known by the author. There is, therefore, every indication that these copyrighted samizdat editions—even if only a handful of copies exists—are no longer conceived of as manuscripts but as released works in a greater, rather anonymous public sphere.

Samizdat thereby established an unusual "forum for communication, which is situated on the threshold between the public and private sphere" that could potentially be taken as a role model for contemporary digital constellations that also cannot be "adequately conceived through the strict dichotomy of private and public communication."[94] In this sense, the NO-ISBN scene that → Bernhard Cella examines oscillates between the private aspect of communication and the desire to enter the public sphere as well. One sometimes has the impression that the status of the publication is purposely left in limbo. Every now and again, the NO-ISBN publications seem to have arisen less from the wish of "creating a public" than from the interest in publishing as a "maker culture."[95] As such, it is in accordance with the general trend of handmade products that has emerged in our society.

Visibility of Cultural Production

Another extreme in dealing with the public sphere is executed by artistic projects that draw on a larger, anonymous public in principle but which consciously refuse to be a part of the established distribution systems and thereby demonstrate en passant the thin border that separates publishing from "random communication and chance encountering."[96] When → Lucas W. Melkane, for instance, leaves copies of his book in a backpack in public spaces as a symbol of protest to the contemporary culture of the market and spectacle and allows it to be found by chance like a message in a bottle, he simulates a thought experiment that is often employed in scholarly discussions in their attempts to define the public sphere in connection with publishing:

> "Here's a brief thought experiment: you write a novel, and leave it on a park bench. Is this a published novel? Let's say you print 1,000 copies, leaving them on 1,000 park benches. How about now? Or how about a publisher buys it, takes out masses of adverts, but literally no one buys a single copy? In what sense has that work been published? At what point does a letter or email pass from private correspondence to public, published text? One hundred or 100,000 recipients? Or is the idea of putting a numerical value on being public absurd, and if so, what conceptual distinction should we make instead? If I post the email on the Internet, we can assume it has been published, but then, if nobody views it, how is it more public than an email sent to 100 people?"[97]

Questions such as these gain particular relevance in light of the new digital forms of production and communication. Melkane's abandoned backpack and the message in a bottle set out at sea that is familiar from previous centuries are in a certain sense analogous to today's posting, blogging or tweeting—all of which have rekindled the discussion about the public nature of publishing.[98]

Furthermore, Lucas W. Melkane's subversive form of undercover distribution contains a high-level of presuppositions in that he is infringing upon the "unwritten etiquette" of this artistic "practice known as 'shop dropping,'" namely "that the goods in question should clearly and explicitly be works of art."[99] As it happens, → Lucas W. Melkane's book is a reprint of Alain Robbe-Grillet's novel *Jealousy* whose story Melkane has supplemented with two details—nevertheless, without indicating them and without listing himself as the author of the reprint. Even if one holds the opinion that the books Melkane placed in the world are published and distributed, they are rarely understood as being "his" work by others. If anything, the publications are circulating under the wrong name. → Eva Weinmayr reports of a similar case in her contribution, where an unknown person added two chapters to a pirate copy of a Jaime Bayly's novel without making any indication of it. Following → Lucas W. Melkane, one could also speak of an "artwork that exists within indifference" in this case; an artwork whose author never reveals his/her identity. Such a work ventures not only to withdraw its distribution from established channels but also to rid itself of the typical distinctions drawn in our culture that are, for instance, connected with the author's function.[100]

The staging of withdrawal is also an apt description of Katie Paterson's *Future Library* (2014), which → Paul Benzon discusses in his contribution. Placing full trust in the future, Paterson planted a forest in 2014 and founded a library for texts that will be submitted yearly by famous authors. These literary texts, however, will only be published on the paper from the trees and presented to the public in 2114. In this constellation of delay that offers neither amplification, distribution nor access, the texts inevitably "remain in a limbo of potentiality."[101] This leads → Paul Benzon to speak of "a corpus of *unpublished* works of fiction" and to pose the question whether Margaret Atwood, who submitted the first text, can already list it in her catalog of *works*.

The long timeframe and uncertainty of the outcome of Katie Paterson's project call attention to the enormous effort that the artist has invested to ensure the longevity of the texts in a secured space: the setting includes a special library room, an archival and library-oriented infrastructure, financial safeguarding (through selling limited editions), city and state funding (the disposal and protection of a piece of forest as well as a library space), as well as private, non-profit engagement (selection panel and committee of trustees). This case seems to also affirm Kenneth Goldsmith's pointer, which → Annette Gilbert discusses in connection with institutional critical publishing projects, that "you have the institution as survival strategy."[102]

There are other publishing projects that take a contrary position and consciously withdraw from the established practices of institutionally disseminating, registering, archiving, and protecting publications. The NO-ISBN movement that → Bernhard Cella discusses in the present volume is an example of such "strategies of decentralization and disobedience."[103] For a variety of reasons, this movement refrains from providing its publications to institutions and the market. As a consequence, it more or less consciously takes the risk of remaining "invisible." This means that they are scarcely ever registered in libraries or archives and are often fated to become invisible or lost, ending much like the so-called gray literature.[104] What is meant here by invisibility is very different than what is meant in Elisabeth Tonnard's *The Invisible Book*: It is of an institutional nature and not of a material one.

Kenneth Goldsmith makes a provocative reversal to what has already been suggested in his *If It Doesn't Exist on the Internet, It Doesn't Exist* where he links the public sphere today with words posted in the Internet and not with those that are printed and institutionally supported:

> "the new radicalism is paper. Right. Publish it on a printed page and no one will ever know about it. It's the perfect vehicle for terrorists, plagiarists, and for subversive thoughts in general. [...] if you don't want it to exist—and there are many reasons to want to keep things private—keep it off the web."[105]

Whether this is the case is up for debate. Nevertheless, the current discourse demonstrates that there are numerous concepts of the public sphere at play here and that an ironclad drawing of fronts between the Internet and print distorts the richness of the constellations of the mediums. Instead of simply counteracting the public sphere of the printed word with that of the posted, it seems more productive to concentrate on mixed forms—like, for instance, experimental post-digital literature that, as → Hannes Bajohr suggests, profit from "the strange status of POD as at once analog and digital"—and to assume that there is a range of visibility in *both* media forms. This is because, as shown, there is a scale of visibility that can be found within a single realm itself (see the example of "visible" institutionally secured publications and mostly "invisible" NO-ISBN publications). Likewise, as → Hannes Bajohr maintains, not every speech act in the Internet has the same status of being "public." Even in the Internet, "existence" in the public sphere depends on a number of constellations, such as the "site" of the "publication" (i.e. there is a difference between private homepages, curated sites and highly-ranked platforms) and the reputation of the speaker: on the Internet "the perlocutionary part of a speech act (and the publishing gesture is one) depends in its outcome on the identity and the status of the agent performing it: It makes a difference *who* publishes *what* in *which context*."

Regardless of how this question is decided, we can nevertheless maintain that if we want to ensure that this form of prolific cultural production that originates outside of established institutions—ignoring here questions concerning the number of copies and whether the publication is digital or in print—will be publicly perceived and enter the cultural memory,

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then alternative ways of labeling, acquiring, assigning value, tracing, and archiving must be discovered—just as → Alessandro Ludovico urges in his contribution: “People involved should then assume responsibility in scanning and sharing, on a personal and independent level, to build their own cultural history, preserving (physically) and sharing (digitally) all the knowledge that they think is valuable.” This can be achieved in the form of a database, such as *NO-ISBN*, samizdat and Internet archives, like *MANI* and *aaaaarg.fail,* formerly *aaaaarg.org*, or in social library projects like *BookCrossing* and *memoryoftheworld.org*—all of which are projects that → Bernhard Cella, Valentina Parisi, Alessandro Ludovico, and Eva Weinmayr present in their contributions. The social components of these self-organized initiatives shouldn’t be underestimated. They often arise out of the desire to share and exchange and serve as a platform for an activist community. According to → Eva Weinmayr in her contribution with the telling title “Library Underground—A Reading List for a Coming Community,” such projects follow in the footsteps of the librarian activists of the 1970s and have aspirations to develop alternative systems of classification and cataloging.

But we are not only concerned with whether or not these publications that exist outside of the institution can be located and archived. The question of assigning value to them is also closely related. By circumventing the established publishing houses and institutions, they lack authority in the public sphere. It is as if they didn’t exist. One can already ascertain from the blanket derogatory designation of self-publishing ventures as “vanity presses” that they are not sufficiently appreciated. As such, they must establish their right to existence and cultural value through other means. If it was previously true that in the established gatekeeper system “[e]ven a book that sold poorly and received no or terrible reviews was considered ‘legitimate’ because someone outside of the author saw value in it,” then publications stemming from outside an institution must face the reality that they “don’t count. New Institutions, not gatekeepers, but alternative groups that take [this kind of] writing [and publishing] seriously will be needed to validate this form of cultural production.”[106] The coming years will show whether this will succeed.

Radical Contemporaneity

On that note, the current volume is a snapshot in the truest sense of the word. The field of publishing as artistic practice is bound to the moment of its emergence and stands out for its extreme contemporaneity: it is part of a continuously changing media landscape that is shaped by economic and institutional upheavals, discursive shifts in legal, political, and artistic fields as well as renegotiations of concepts of authorship, creativity, the public sphere, and accessibility. Not only does publishing stand at the intersection of these developments but it is actively introducing new ruptures—but no more so than in publishing as artistic practice whose defined sensibility and delight in experimentation in all realms of publishing incite and inspire the registration of slightest tensions and quakes, the diagnosis of subtle dislocations, the critical reflection on both the status quo and emerging developments, and the probing of new potentials in the field of publishing. It is still unforeseeable whether the ideas and concepts emerging in the context of publishing as artistic practice will have a "Duchamp-like" impact later—but at least something is happening that is steeped in a grand cultural tradition and that is concurrently challenging this tradition, promising openness and open spaces, new beginnings and deeper insights. In the end, the concepts and projects of publishing as artistic practice build on and develop publishing culture as well as perform a form of artistic research that can also be highly beneficial for science and society as well as for the publishing, literary, and art world.

Making the Invisible Visible: On the Present Volume

The publication of a volume on publishing also enables and enforces a very practical, direct way of thinking about publishing, since the current volume is steeped in the practices, processes, rules, and framing conditions of publishing—all of which are the subject of the present publication. Finally, this volume also circulates in the "horizons of the publishable" that "denote[] both a boundary or limit and the conditions of a possibility."[107] The choice of publishing house and contributors by the editor, for example, programmatically situates the volume at the intersection of artistic and academic discourse, but it also influences the editorial and design-based traits, which give the volume its particular character.

An edited volume necessarily oscillates between the individuality of the particular voices and the necessity of unifying them into a whole. The usual practice in academic publishing with its guidelines and style sheets—especially regarding formatting, spelling, citation, and copyright—aims at harmonization, but runs the risk of homogenization and uniformity. The attempt to dispel of all norms in order to preserve the peculiarities of the author's voices and to also reflect the range and variety of contributions that originate in highly diverse publishing, writing and academic cultures, has proven to be impractical, which is why the standards of the publishing house, the Chicago Manual of Style, and American spelling have been followed. It is only in the academic style of quoting that a few artistic and literary contributions find a certain amount of freedom.

The design of this book itself engages with this irresolvable conflict between individuality and control in the name of a coherent whole. The design has created a framework similar to the guidelines and style sheet which integrates the individual contributors and their voices. Whereas, consistent design elements like the fonts and the unified print space create constancy and uniformity, the variant graphic styles for the academic articles, interviews, and essayistic/artistic contributions, as well as the dynamic column of footnotes, create variance. The individually designed title pages, which are an interpretation of the respective contributions, allow for all contributions, regardless of their length, to have the same presence while also highlighting both their specificity and singularity.

On top of this, the designers themselves contribute to the publishing discussion when they reflect on the peculiarities and artistic potential of the book as a medium and the publishing practice by making visual insertions and quotations dispersed throughout the book. This meta-level is decisive for the cover's design as well. Using the data that is of prime importance for bibliographies and distribution, the cover exhibits the standard parameters and framing conditions of publishing in distended proportions and brings the inside out by reversing its recto and verso. As such, it makes the hidden and invisible elements of the publishing practice visible, which, in the end, was the objective of the present volume.

Translated by Shane Anderson

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1 "As opposed to the artist book that refers directly to the book as a work of art, 'publishing' transfers the socioeconomical, technical, and legal aspects of dissemination of the artist work—the activity of making it public to a specific audience." Delphine Bedel, "Meta/Books - Publishing as Artistic Practice," in *Code—X. Paper, Ink, Pixel and Screen*, ed. Danny Aldred and Emmanuelle Waeckerlé (Farnham: bookRoom, 2015), 03:11-03:22, 03:15f.

2 See Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike von Savigny, eds., *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001); David G. Stern, "The Practical Turn," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, ed. Stephen P. Turner and Paul A. Roth (Malden, MA, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 185-206.

3 Andreas Reckwitz, "Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 32, no. 4 (2003): 282-301, 282 [unless otherwise noted all translations S.A.].

4 Stern, "The Practical Turn," 185.

5 Ibid., 186.

6 Andreas Reckwitz, "Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 2 (2002): 243-263, 250.

7 Stern, "The Practical Turn," 189f.

8 See the statements by Michalis Pichler and Lucas W. Melkane, the interviews with Vadim Zakharov, Bernhard Cella, and the artist publishers of the first generation in the contribution by Anne Mœglin-Delcroix as well as the self-reflective descriptions that Nick Thurston, Antoine Lefebvre, Aurélie Noury, and Eva Weinmayr give of their own practices.

9 See Bedel, "Meta/Books"; Regine Ehleiter, "Publishing as Artistic Practice. A Conversation with Delphine Bedel," *Eikon* 86 (May 2014): 41-47; Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur - L'edition comme pratique artistique alternative" (Ph.D. diss., Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2014), online http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis; Bernhard Cella, Leo Findeisen and Agnes Blaha, eds., *NO-ISBN. On Self-Publishing* (Cologne: Walther König, 2015); Andrea Francke and Eva Weinmayr, "The Piracy Project," in *Code—X*, 01:07-01:18; Eva Weinmayr, "One Publishes to Find Comrades," in *The Visual Event, an Education in Appearances*, ed. Oliver Klimpel (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2014), 50-59.

10 See Nick Thurston, "Publishing as a Praxis of Conceptualist Reading Performances," *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* 6, no. 3 (2013): 421-429; Nick Thurston and

Sharon Kivland, "Reading. Some Positions," in *The Book is Alive!* ed. Emmanuelle Wackerlé and Richard Sawdon Smith (Farnham: bookroom, 2013), 150–159; Hannes Bajohr, ed., *Code and Concept. Literature and the Digital* (Berlin: Frohmann, 2016); Alessandro Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print. The Mutation of Publishing since 1894* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2012).

11 Still in 2006 Simone Murray gave a diagnosis on the "contemporary publishing studies' embryonic institutional and disciplinary status." Simone Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2006): 3–25, 13. Although there are countless higher education programs under this label, they are primarily designed to meet the qualifications of practitioners in the publishing industry and often unilaterally emphasize trade book publishing or academic/educational publishing. This theme remains acutely there. See the contributions by Josipa Selthofer, Christoph Bläsi, Bertrand Legendre, and Sophie Noël in *Libellarium* 8, no. 1 (2015).

12 Rachel Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable: Publishing in/as Literary Studies," *ELH* 75 (2008): 707–735, 708.

13 It is further stated that: "It's similar to the challenge that has faced curating and exhibitions history since the 1990s: how to develop a sophisticated meta-consciousness about a field of action that many assume to be secondary or to overlap with already established disciplines of knowledge, like art history." Louise O'Hare, "Artists at Work: Nick Thurston" [22.8.2012], http://www.afterall.org/online/7239.

14 All quotations from Robert Darnton, "What is the history of books?" *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 65–83, 67.

15 Thus, for instance, the term "publisher" is an anachronism. See the alternative model suggested by Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, "A New Model for the Study of the Book," in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*, ed. Nicolas Barker (London: British Library, 1993), 5–43.

16 See the draft of a simplified communications circuit for the digital age in Adriaan van der Weel, "The Communications Circuit Revisited," *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis* 8 (2001): 13–25.

17 See Adams and Barker, "A New Model"; Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 711, and Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine. Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London, New York, Delhi: Anthem, 2013), 104–106.

18 See Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

19 Lothar Müller, "Das Ungedruckte autorisieren. Wie die Wahrheit zu Papier kommt," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* IV, no. 4 (2010): 14–22, 15.

20 Stein Haugom Olsen, "Defining A Literary Work," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1976): 133–142, 134.

21 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 5.

22 Ibid., 169.

23 Ibid., 140.

24 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 708.

25 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 140.

26 All quotations ibid., 18, 33, 34, 105 and 114. See for the relationship between posting and publishing the most recent and elaborate examination from Paul Soulellis, "Making Public" (paper presented at Fondation Galeries LaFayette, Paris, June 22, 2015).

27 All quotations from Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 80, 89, 104, 117 and 133.

28 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 709.

29 Ibid.

30 More than a few of the publishing projects and works discussed in the current volume are in this sense borderline cases which can equally be regarded both as literature and as art.

31 O'Hare, "Artists at Work: Nick Thurston." This development was reflected upon early on in the literary scene, see for instance Kenneth Goldsmith's seminar "Publishing as Practice" in 2006/07 at School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

32 Nick Thurston, "Who is taking responsibility for that text?" (paper presented at the meeting for the International Text and Image Association, Chicago, February 2014).

33 Ibid.

34 From the publishing announcement of Robert Klanten, Matthias Hübner, eds., *Fully Booked. Cover Art and Design for Books* (Berlin: Gestalten, 2008), http://shop.gestalten.com/fully-booked.html [emphasis mine]. A stock-taking of innovative approaches in book design has been provided by Robert Klanten, Matthias Hübner, Andrew Losowsky, eds., *Fully Books: Ink on Paper. An Exhibition of Design and Concepts for New Publications* (Berlin: Gestalten, 2013).

35 Craig Mod, "Designing Books in the Digital Age," in *Book: A Futurist's Manifesto. A Collection of Essays from the Bleeding Edge of Publishing*, ed. Hugh McGuire and Brian O'Leary (Boston, MA: O'Reilly Media, 2012), 81–105, 90.

36 Ann Swidler, "What anchors cultural practices," in Schatzki et al., *The Practice Turn*, 74–92, 74.

37 Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur," 269.

38 Barbara Moore and Jon Hendricks, "The Page as Alternative Space. 1950 to 1969," in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Rochester, New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1993), 87–95.

39 Ulises Carrión, "Bookworks Revisited," in *Second Thoughts* (Amsterdam: VOID Distributors, 1980), 56–70, 64.

40 According to the theme of a conversation to which the MoMA Library invited on July 11, 2012 and Sarah Bodman, "New pages: Celebrating the Book as a Democratic Multiple in a Variety of Twenty-First-Century Forms," in *The Book is Alive!* 122–129, 125.

41 See for example the adoption of holistic book concepts in the literary publishing houses that produce bestsellers (see → Alexander Starre) and the coupling of digital publishing and POD as dissemination strategies (see → Hannes Bajohr).

42 See for instance the 2014 Zurich exhibition *Poetry Will Be Made By All*, co-curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Kenneth Goldsmith (see → Hannes Bajohr).

43 See for instance Craig Dworkin, Simon Morris and Nick Thurston, *Do or DIY* (York: Information as Material, 2012).

44 O'Hare, Louise, "Artists at Work: Nick Thurston."

45 John W. Maxwell, "Publishing Education in the 21st Century and the Role of the University," *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 17, no. 2 (2014), http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/3336451.0017.205.

46 Katarzyna Bazarnik, "Time for Liberature," in Zenon Fajfer, *Liberature or total literature. Collected Essays 1999–2009* (Kraków: Ha!art, 2010), 7–8, 7.

47 For a more comprehensive view on the "literary bibliographer" who "draws book design into the signifying territory of the work," see Alexander Starre, *Metamedia: American Book Fictions and Literary Print Culture after Digitization* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 168 and 171.

48 Ulises Carrión, "The New Art of Making Books," in *Second Thoughts*, 5–22, 8.

49 Thurston, "Publishing as a Praxis," 424.

50 According also to the maxim of his imprint Information as Material. Thurston and Kivland, "Reading. Some Positions," 151.

51 Carrión, "The New Art of Making Books," 8.

52 "I found Stéphane Mallarmé to be a precursor in the idea of authors making books, instead of just writing texts. [...] Mallarmé would therefore be one of the first examples of this 'new art of making books' that Carrion links to artists' books."

53 Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo, eds., *A History of Reading in the West* (London: Polity, 1995), 5. Similarly, Roger E. Stoddard, "Morphology and the Book from an American Perspective," *Printing History* 9 (1987): 2–14.

54 More detailed in Thurston, "Publishing as a Praxis," esp. 423 and 425.

55 See Heinrich Bosse, *Autorschaft ist Werkherrschaft. Über die Entstehung des Urheberrechts aus dem Geist der Goethezeit* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2014), 18.

56 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 709.

57 Thurston, "Publishing as a Praxis," 423.

58 Thurston and Kivland, "Reading. Some Positions," 151.

59 Thurston, "Who is taking responsibility for that text?"

60 See → Annette Gilbert's deliberations on VanessaPlace Inc. in the present volume.

61 Thurston, "Who is taking responsibility for that text?"

62 Ibid.

63 Thurston can thereby draw upon Rachel Malik's definition of a book as "a *site* where various publishing processes—writing, editing, design, marketing, production—intersect and conflict." Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 710 [emphasis mine].

64 Holly Melgard, *Reimbur$ement* (Troll Thread, 2013), 4. For more details see → Hannes Bajohr.

65 Kenneth Goldsmith: *Theory* (Paris: Jean Boîte Éditions, 2015), n.p.

66 Thurston, "Who is taking responsibility for that text?"

67 Dorothea von Hantelmann, "The Curatorial Paradigm," *The Exhibitionist*, 4 (2011): 6–12, 8.

68 Goldsmith: *Theory*, n.p. In a further aphorism, he adopts the concept of curating for literature: "Writers are becoming curators of language, a move similar to the emergence of the curator as artist in the visual arts."

69 Announcement of the publishing house, http://www.jean-boite.fr/box/theory-english-edition [emphasis mine].

70 The differences and similarities between the publishing practice and the editorial practice should be considered separately. In the current discourse, the boundaries between them are often blurred.

71 All quotations from Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 185.

72 Darren Wershler, "Afterword: Title of Essay in Plain Type," in Nick Thurston, *Of the Subcontract. Or, Principles of Poetic Right* (York: Information as Material, 2013), 133–141, 139. "This book is not a solution but a symptom, a litmus test of larger social changes, both basic and corrosive." Ibid.

73 Matthew Stadler, "What is Publication Studio?" (paper presented at a conference at Musagetes in Guelph, Ontario, June 6, 2012), online http://musagetes.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/What-is-Publication-Studio-by-Matthew-Stadler.pdf, 11.

74 All quotations from Rüdiger Schnell, "Handschrift und Druck. Zur funktionalen Differenzierung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," *IASL* 32, no. 1 (2007): 66–111, 71, 102 and 93. See also: "Print technology created the public." Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (London: Penguin, 1996), 68.

75 Müller, "Das Ungedruckte autorisieren," 18.

76 Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access* (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 2000).

77 Müller, "Das Ungedruckte autorisieren," 18.

78 Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 17.

79 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 18f. [emphasis mine]. Praxeological approaches, however, suggest that *every* act is in reference to other people, which is why every act would be public and it is only the degree of public sphere that varies. This implies that there is no *single* public sphere.

80 Soulellis, "Making Public."

81 "About," http://www.publicationstudio.biz/about.

82 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 163.

83 Bhaskar deliberates: "Publishing has large consequences on the public sphere as the littoral between private thoughts and the public realm. [...] There is insufficient space to explore this idea in detail. Providing an explanation of the public sphere is itself a book-length project or more. It should be noted however that there must be a relationship of some sort." Ibid.

84 There are differing opinions regarding the concept of "community," since "that allows a false implication of openness. I prefer the word 'public' because it is literally an open space, and it does not imply harmony. [...] it includes conflict." Matthew Stadler in Antoine Lefebvre, "Entretien avec/Interview with Matthew Stadler," in *Portrait de l'artiste en* éditeur. *Entretiens*, http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis, 21–43, 31.

85 Bernhard Cella, "NO-ISBN as a political strategy," in *NO-ISBN*, 379–408, 405.

86 Eva Weinmayr, "One Publishes to Find Comrades."

87 Bosse, *Autorschaft ist Werkherrschaft*, 41.

88 As it has been sketched by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas and Nancy Fraser, the difficult connection between abstract, rather immaterial public sphere and concrete public spaces needs to be examined separately, especially with respect to the public nature of publishing. A first step in this direction has been made by Lionel Ruffel, "The Public Spaces of Contemporary Literature," *Qui parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2014): 101–122.

89 Carlos Spoerhase, "'Manuscript für Freunde.' Die materielle Textualität literarischer Netzwerke, 1760–1830 (Gleim, Klopstock, Lavater, Fichte, Reinhold, Goethe)," *DVJS* 88, no. 2 (2014): 172–205, 182.

90 For samizdat and Moscow Conceptualism's preference for letters see Annette Gilbert, "'Falt ihn zusammen und steck ihn zurück.' Der Brief in der vor-gutenbergschen Wortkultur des russischen Samizdat," in *Der Brief – Ereignis und Objekt. Frankfurter Tagung*, ed. Waltraud Wiethölter and Anne Bohnenkamp (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld 2010), 184–195.

91 "A higher quality and a greater degree of perfection are expected from a print than from a handwritten transmission. A print was considered as an *opus perfectum*, not only in the sense of a quantitative completion, but also from a qualitative integrity." Schnell, "Handschrift und Druck," 78.

92 Karl Löffler and Joachim Kirchner, eds., *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens* (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1936), 411f.

93 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 120.

94 Spoerhase, "'Manuscript für Freunde,'" 203.

95 That some publishing projects may be jaded by the satisfaction of the creative production process is also suspected with respect to the burgeoning POD production: "POD technologies enable an extraordinary and interesting new cultural practice—a form of popular culture centered on *production* rather than consumption." Ann Haugland, "Opening the Gates: Print On-Demand Publishing as Cultural Production," *Publishing Research Quarterly* (Fall 2006): 3–16, 4 [emphasis mine].

96 Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, 148. This is in accord with Alessandro Ludovico's thesis: "Publishing cannot exist without distribution." Ibid., 147.

97 Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, 18f.

98 See Soulellis, "Making Public."

99 Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, 148. For further examples of the implementation of this artistic strategy in the field of publishing see ibid., 147–149.

100 The problem, however, is the implicit intention to deceive buyers and readers and the falsification of the Alain Robbe-Grillet and Jaime Bayly's authorial intentions.

101 Seekers of lice, "Invent the Present: Footnotes," in *The Book is Alive!* 54–63, 55.

102 "I, for example, owe my career to academies and institutions; if my work is not being taught or written about, it doesn't exist." Kenneth Goldsmith, "My Career in Poetry or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Institution," *Umělec* 1 (2012).

103 Gabrielle Cram, "NO-ISBN – The An-Archive as Subject," in *NO-ISBN*, 259–265, 265.

104 This also often applies to the majority of POD products, since, according to → Hannes Bajohr, "despite the inherent reproducibility of POD, the books do not circulate, are not disseminated, and have no pretensions for finding an expansive readership." See also Peter Brantley, "The New Missing Books," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 28 (2012): 172–175.

105 Kenneth Goldsmith, "If It Doesn't Exist on the Internet, It Doesn't Exist," September 27, 2005, http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/if_it_doesnt_exist.html.

106 Haugland, "Opening the Gates," 15.

107 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 721.

SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS TOWARD A STUDY OF THE VARIETIES OF ARTIST PUBLISHERS IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

Anne Mœglin-Delcroix

41

Nihil novi sub sole?

The importance acquired by artist publishers in the years 1960–70 was unprecedented. But the phenomenon itself was not new: the history of the artist's edition is punctuated by great figures and ambitious undertakings, like those of William Blake in the late eighteenth century, Balzac during the 1820s and William Morris's Kelmscott Press in the late nineteenth century. However, it should be observed that this history, above all, in the twentieth century, was dominated by writers, such as Virginia Woolf in Britain (the Hogarth Press), whose example was followed by various members of the Bloomsbury Group, and in France Georges Hugnet (Les Éditions de la montagne) or Pierre André Benoît (under the name PAB), to cite only a few. Even more numerous were the poets and writers who were founders and publishers of reviews.

What was really new in the sixties and seventies was the extension of this phenomenon to the field of the visual arts and its amplification over the years. This extension and amplification were directly related to the adoption, obviously much more surprising among artists than writers, of the simple book as an artistic medium of primary importance. But it is not particularly surprising that the proliferation of artists' books and magazines over the years should have led to the emergence of artist publishers. The reason was basically the same as for writers: freedom. The freedom to publish their works, as rapidly as possible, in the form they wanted and without being answerable to anyone else.

Freedom, as we know, was the key word in those years of self-affirmation and struggle for independence in all areas of social life and culture. Art was no exception. In the field of artists' publications, this craving for independence certainly had a political coloring. (What didn't in the sixties?) But it was rarely explicitly claimed in political terms except in the countries of Eastern Europe or Latin America, then under dictatorial regimes, where publishing was strictly controlled and self-publishing was the only solution. But elsewhere the decision to self-publish, or publish one's friends, primarily reflected artists' desire to have complete responsibility for their own work and dispense with the authorization of the art institutions, the values they embodied, and models they imposed. It responded to the artists' urge to control the whole production process and do without intermediaries, meaning checks and obstacles between the project (conception) and its fulfillment (printing), or even its presentation and distribution. Self-organization was the outcome of this urge toward self-sufficiency. Publishing one's own works (as in the case of Edward Ruscha or Ian Hamilton Finlay, for instance), or those of one's artistic family (with Dieter Roth, Dick Higgins, Simon Cutts, herman de vries, Maurizio Nannucci, Leif Eriksson, among the most important, to be discussed here), expressed a superlative form of freedom of artistic expression.

It should be noted in this respect that the political argument for wider distribution, often stressed when discussing the origins of the artist's book presented as a democratic alternative to the unique work of art, though it had some foundation, was less common among artist publishers than the personal aspiration for freedom of action, which was common to all of them without exception. herman de vries clearly illustrates this widespread outlook. Asked about his early work as a publisher in Arnhem in 1960, on the occasion of his first personal book (untitled, known as *wit is overdaad*), he described it as just one facet of his many-sided activity as an "emancipated" artist who was also an author of texts and a commentator on his own works. "i had the idea that now artists were 'emancipated,' so i did it myself. I also gave short talks at the openings of my own exhibitions for that reason in the sixties."[1] In 1974 (for his little book *noise*), though he had not lacked publishers for his works since 1960, de vries created what he called temporary travelling press publications during a stay in Nepal, in direct response to the resources offered by Kathmandu, especially paper and printers. "i discovered some small printers with unexpected possibilities: they were still printing with lead type that they obtained from india where the printers were selling their old lead type because they preferred to work with the modern offset, so we had a choice of older types that were no longer available in many other places—and, more importantly, it was cheap."[2] Opportunity makes the publisher. And circumstances. In summer, whenever herman de vries is not traveling and works in Eschenau, where he lives in Germany, he renames his publishing house: eschenau summer press.

It is significant that among those who will later publish other artists and thus become actual publishers, all began, like herman de vries, as publishers of their own works. Most often, it was the first of them. Dick Higgins launched Something Else Press with *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* in New York in 1964; Maurizio Nannucci founded Exempla in Florence in 1967 by publishing a multiple, *Rosso*; Simon Cutts created Coracle Press in London in 1975 by publishing six titles of his own (though not his first). Leif Eriksson started Wedgepress & Cheese with his first-ever artist's book in the strict sense (after a series of object-books), *The Waste Paper Act* in Malmö in 1978.

As for Dieter Roth, who was the first of all, he took this approach to an extreme. In 1957, in Reykjavík, he founded forlag ed because he was unable to find a publisher for his first book, *Kinderbuch* (1954). So he published it himself, with a print run of a hundred copies.[3] He continued to publish his books under the same name until 1961. He then went into partnership with Hansjörg Mayer in 1968, largely to publish his *Gesammelte Werke* (*Collected Works*), but having a publisher did not prevent him from establishing other personal publishing organizations at the same time. In 1971, he founded Verlag (*sic*) to release his "essays," then, in 1974, he set up Dieter Roth Familienverlag (becoming Dieter Roth Verlag in 1978) to issue books and records by his family and friends, as well as the journal *Zeitschrift für alles* (Magazine for Everything), when Hansjörg Mayer gave it up after the first three numbers.[4]

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[1] herman de vries, "answers to anne mœglin-delcroix's questions about artists' books and so," in *herman de vries. les livres et les publications. catalogue raisonné* (Saint-Yrieix: Centre des livres d'artistes, 2005), 276. It is widely known that herman de vries has suppressed the use of upper case in his work.

[2] Ibid., 272.

[3] Dieter Roth, "Interview with Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson" (1986), in *Gesammelte Interviews*, ed. Barbara Wien (London: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 2002), 391 and 394.

[4] Most of those chronological details are found in: *Roth Time. A Dieter Roth Retrospective*, ed. Theodora Vischer and Bernadette Walter, text by Dirk Dobke and Bernadette Walter (New York: The Museum of Modern Art; Baden: Lars Müller, 2003).

He then continued by publishing facsimiles in photocopy of his old *Tagebücher* (diaries), some of his exhibition catalogs, written at the same time as he was preparing the exhibitions, etc. Dieter Roth is an ultimate example of editorial dynamism because he did everything, or practically everything, himself, so as to ensure control over his own work, but also to be able to publish a lot and quickly, at the same hectic pace that he worked. It was definitely freedom that gave him his driving force as a publisher. But it should be added that publishing gradually grew so important that it became utterly inseparable from his work, itself inseparable from his life. It was not just a part of his work, as it was for the artists mentioned earlier.

The Poet is Born, the Publisher is Made

About art in the years 1960–70, it has become commonplace in the discourses of art historians and critics to insist, quite rightly, on the de-specialization of artists, a corollary of the "de-definition" of the art of which they were the protagonists. Many artists are known who, without being born artists according to the Ciceronian adage (*nascuntur poetae, fiunt oratores*), still turned themselves into artists by a sudden personal decision, a kind of intellectual conversion, without attending art school or even practicing an artistic technique. But so much stress has been laid on this "generalist artist"—who, though without professional competence or acquired skills, regarded all means as valid for making art, as if the will would make the way—that we tend to assume that in the case of those who became publishers, publishing was added, as another spontaneous ability, to a creative versatility that was in principle unlimited.

Nothing could be less true. It is indisputable that artists self-published sporadically, without any special training, taking advantage of the machines at their disposal, such as mimeographs, photocopiers and stapling machines, or even by turning to others for help. But those artists who published their own books or those of their friends with some continuity did so on the basis of their specific skills and their practical experience of printing and sometimes publishing. There are only a few exceptions: Ian Hamilton Finlay, but he was familiar with the world of books because of his debut as a poet and surrounded himself with loyal collaborators; herman de vries, but his eye had been trained by his often critical interest in layout and other physical aspects of book production.[5] Moreover, for these and other artists (Dieter Roth, Simon Cutts, Maurizio Nannucci), who had formerly engaged with concrete poetry, the technical issues bound up with graphic design (typography, layout, etc.) were already raised by their visual work, and vice versa.

For most of them, the printing trades in one form or other provided their initial training or early employment. Some points are worth mentioning in this respect. Edward Ruscha, so attentive to format, layout, paper, and in general the appearance he

[5] de vries, "answers to anne mœglin-delcroix's questions," 273.

wanted to give his books, which he himself described as a "professional feel,"[6] first earned his living as a graphic designer in advertising and paged up the first issues of *Artforum*. Maurizio Nannucci was also a graphic designer (of theater posters and record sleeves), to which he added learning on the job, favored in the late 1960s and early 70s by the political posters and leaflets he printed with makeshift means. Exempla, founded by Nannucci in 1967, was an artists' cooperative and printing press. At Zona, which he founded in 1974, there was a small offset press to be used to print publications oneself.[7] These publishing houses, to which was added Recorthings for music, exemplified what Nannucci also claimed as professionalism: "Publishing is a form of art which gives the artist a degree of independence and also affirms the professional quality of the work."[8] Freedom is not incompatible with know-how—quite the contrary. Freedom can be exercised all the better when accompanied by the appropriate technical skills.

Dieter Roth left high school without gaining a diploma in 1947, then began his apprenticeship in commercial art in Bern. The following year he enrolled at the Gewerbeschule (vocational school), where he attended, among others, courses in design and typography. This enabled him, while working as an artist, to get a job as a typographer in a printing works and later with design firms, among the many other ways he earned his living. We know he mastered all the traditional printing techniques (to which he added his own inventions) and in 1970 opened his own printing shop in Braunschweig for his graphics.[9] The publisher Dieter Roth was first a printer by profession.

Long before founding Coracle Press in 1975, Simon Cutts met Stuart Mills in 1964 and began working in his bookstore, The Trentbookshop, in Nottingham, then became his partner in the founding of Tarasque Press. After using a mimeograph machine, then the services of a printer who had an offset machine, in 1968 they bought a printing press, "largely because we thought we could try to learn to print and do things that we could not persuade other printers to do. [...] So we just got into it a bit and found out how to order paper, found out how to cut paper up, how you take format sizes out of whole sheets and all that kind of stuff. We carried on and that understanding just increased."[10] Most of the early publications at Coracle Press were still printed on this press until 1978 when it finally broke down from overuse. But they had completed their apprenticeship.

The colophons of the books published by Leif Eriksson often record that he was responsible for the typesetting, layout and even the binding. While quite young, between leaving boarding school and doing his military service, Eriksson had worked for a large printer, Almqvist & Wiksell in Uppsala, which printed theses for the university and had a monopoly over printing calendars and almanacs in Sweden. "I worked in the printing house and I also worked for a time in the page setting department and ended up in the bookbinding department. I learned everything from that Almqvist & Wiksell."[11]

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[6] John Coplans, "Concerning 'Various Small Fires': Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications" (1965), in *Leave Any Information at the Signal: Writings, Interviews, Bits, Pages*, ed. Alexandra Schwartz (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 24.

[7] Maurizio Nannucci, unpublished interview with the author (in collaboration with Annalisa Rimmaudo and Laurence Corbel), Florence, July 19–20, 2013.

[8] "Bookmakers: Some Remarks on Artists' Books and Archives. A Conversation Between Maurizio Nannucci and Gabriele Detterer," in *Bookmakers* (Saint-Yrieix-La-Perche: Pays-Paysage, 1995), unpag.

[9] Some of this information comes from the chronology in *Roth Time. A Dieter Roth Retrospective*. On Dieter Roth's work as a typographer during four years, see "Dieter Roth über Bücher usw., Gespräch mit Kees Broos" (1986), in *Gesammelte Interviews*, 377.

[10] Simon Cutts, "Tarasque, The Trentbookshop, Coracle, Workfortheeyetodo," an interview with Wolfgang Görtschacher (1994–1997), in *Some Forms of Availability. Critical Passages on the Book and Publication by Simon Cutts* ([New York]: Granary Books; Cromford: RGAP, 2007), 34.

The most accomplished technician was definitely Dick Higgins, because his training as a printer was a vocation. But he was an extreme case by his very professionalism, as we shall see. Interested in printing since adolescence, he chose to study at the Manhattan School of Printing, where he learned various techniques, including offset.

> "And when I finished the Manhattan School of Printing, I had become a good technician. As a job, when I returned to Europe in March 1963, after the Yam Festival, I worked in a small print works called Zaccar Offset. [...] When I left Zaccar Offset, I worked for a company that produced books, where I learned special printing and production techniques."[12]

He kept friends there, with whom he continued to work to produce books at the Something Else Press starting in late 1963, sometimes paying his bills by designing books for them.

> "In 1963 I worked for Book Press, and in 1964, for a publisher who reprinted textbooks, mainly for libraries. It taught me what sort of books libraries wanted, which was very important for Something Else Press."[13]

The librarians were not only concerned about the contents of the books, but the quality of the materials, including acid-free paper.

The price of this extreme competence (which hardly fits the picture we generally have of a Fluxus artist) is that for Dick Higgins professionalism turned into a profession and the publisher eventually devoured the artist. He himself declared he left Something Else Press in 1973, handing over its management to others, partly because it was in dire financial straits, but also because his work as a publisher competed with his work as an artist. "I was also torn between the desire to do my own work and my role as publisher."[14] Barbara Moore, who was taken on as an editor after Something Else Press was founded, has described the way Dick Higgins did everything: he chose the titles himself, was responsible for design, production, finance, press releases, the printed blurbs on the covers, and he kept a close eye on production.[15] It is revealing in this respect that Ken Friedman, in his obituary paying tribute to him,[16] regretted that Dick Higgins was less well known as an artist than a publisher. There are good reasons for this: his work as a publisher was a full-time job.

The character of the artist as an amateur publisher, improvising, devoid of any technical expertise or experience of any profession, is therefore a largely imaginary construct, at least in the case of the most active and constant of them. It was partly due to a certain mythologizing of early artists' books, which underestimated both the role of publishers and the

[11] Leif Eriksson, unpublished interview with the author, Malmö, November 10, 2014.

[12] Jacques Donguy, "Entretien avec Dick Higgins," Barrytown, April 7 and 8, 1992, in *Poésure et Peintrie*, ed. Bernard Blistène (Marseille: Musées de Marseille, 1993), 423. Zaccar Offset became the printer of Fluxus.

[13] Ibid.

[14] "Dick Higgins, la Something Else Press," interview with Christian Xatrec, *Art Press* 188 (February 1994): 19.

[15] Barbara Moore, "Some Things Else about Something Else," in *Something Else Press*, pamphlet (New York: Granary Books Gallery, 1991), unpag.

[16] "Dick Higgins, 1938–1998," *Umbrella* XXI, no. 3–4 (December 1998): 107.

importance of technical skills. Indeed artists, critics, and historians have got together to blur everything that could evoke continuity with established practices in the history of the book. In order to effectively defend the right to exist of the new object that was the artist's book, it was felt to be necessary to promote the idea that it was breaking completely with the tradition of the luxury illustrated book, in which craft skills are essential and the publisher's role vital. Such a tactical simplification masks the fact that the break in question, though very real, passed more through the book as an object in itself (whose modest appearance, small format, and low price were actually the antithesis of the pretentious pomposity in books for bibliophile collectors) than through the technical means used to produce it, with the exception of engraving, excluded because it was closely associated with rare and expensive books. Moreover, the cycle of book production in 1960–70 was much more difficult to master than nowadays, when editing software and office printers make the work of artist publishers much easier, sometimes rather too easy, enabling them to make a book without getting up from the computer.[17] By force of circumstances, when someone intended to do without the established structures of the artistic edition (museums, galleries, specialist publishers), but still wanted to produce a quality printed work cheaply (as was the case of the artist publishers discussed in this study), he had to possess a minimum of practical knowledge to be able to watch over the production, even technical skills (composition of the content, layout, and sometimes printing and binding), in order to keep costs down.

Conversely, one could advance this hypothesis: it is perhaps a certain incapacity assumed in those areas, combined with an interest in the materially well-made book, which led such important artists in the history of the artists' book as Jean Le Gac, Robert Filliou, or Marcel Broodthaers, to turn over responsibility for the production of their books, including the graphic design, to their publishers (Lebeer-Hossmann, for example, the publisher of all three), whose profession, or part of whose profession, it was. And here is another plausible hypothesis: we can assume that among the Conceptual artists, for whom the book was in principle its content and the interest in print purely intellectual, the lack of artist publishers may be explained by the irreducibly craft dimension of publishing, even in the case of publications as spartan as theirs. The exception that proves the rule is the series of booklets self-published by Art-Language between 1967 and 1973: often bound by a plastic strip (instead of the usual staples), issued in very few copies, ostentatiously numbered and signed, they display a "handmade" character surprising in the context of Conceptual art.

Contrasting Kinds of Publishers: Elements for a Future Typology

Two main arguments, which have since become canonical, were used from the start to defend the legitimacy of the artist's book as compared with the artwork in the traditional sense of the term. The first, the search for an "alternative space"[18] for art, meaning a different mode of existence and presentation of the works, and the second, the need for their wider distribution, considered a condition of art's democratization or at least its availability. The problem is that if the utopia of easier access to art was an essential part of the book as an alternative space, this same space, essentially critical, hence by definition marginal, escaped from the mainstream and was in reality difficult to combine with wide distribution.

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[17] By a paradoxical retroactive effect, some of the publications of the sixties and seventies, which according to conventional bibliophile criteria passed for simple and even ordinary, when compared to certain books today have come to appear sophisticated and almost like fine art editions!

In fact, what we actually find is distribution based on affinity, intense but restricted, qualitative rather than quantitative, so to speak. This kind of distribution functioned within and on the scale of a narrow social group, a network of artists, collectors, and readers (often the very same people), with the publisher as their cement. They were book lists periodically sent out to the publisher's correspondents, which gradually gave visible form to an implicit community. This may have been a clearly defined group, with close ties, durably united by a shared aesthetic and themes, making it almost a "school," with a team of active contributors as at Coracle Press; a circle of friendship and artistic encounters with uncertain outlines, in the case of eschenau summer press & temporary travelling press publications, around herman de vries; a national network of artists, Swedish in this case, thanks to Leif Eriksson's personal commitment to making their publications known; or an international network when, in the case of Nannucci, publishing embodied a deliberate strategy of communication. Be that as it may, people read, published, and met up with others who shared the same interests and had similar concerns. Should we be surprised?

Having said that, and although we tend to speak of the "artist publisher" as of a clearly defined entity in art in the 1960s–70s, a sort of new function that appeared in the artistic landscape in that period, it would be important to enter into the details of practices so as to avoid smoothing over the differences and creating a uniform, but again imaginary, figure. In reality, if we accept the declarations of intent of the artist publishers, which tend to be repetitive—notably about the two factors mentioned above, of providing art with an alternative space and a wide distribution—we will fail to see the complex reality, the singular position of each in the field of contemporary art then being structured: in brief, the specifics of the work of each artist and their approach to the two factors in question. You only have to browse through the overview entitled *The Artist Publisher*,[19] presented by Simon Cutts in 1986, which covers both self-publishing and artists' presses, to realize the diversity and sometimes divergence in their approaches, despite the fact that the title is in the singular (and disregarding the selection based on sometimes excessively broad criteria[20]).

It is not possible, within the limits of this article, to give some idea of this plurality of approaches, or even to sketch a typology.[21] Here I will have to confine myself to giving some idea of the desirability of accurately mapping a field that is less homogeneous than is generally thought, with two examples. We can briefly compare two kinds of publishers, similar in their aspirations but antithetical in their practice, even on the two key issues of "the alternative" and distribution, though they were both apparently in agreements on those points. They are Simon Cutts (Coracle Press) and Dick Higgins (Something Else Press).

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[18] Kate Linker, "The Artist's Book as an Alternative Space," *Studio International* cxcv, no. 990 (1980): 75–79.

[19] *The Artist Publisher*, exhibition catalog by Coracle Press (London: Crafts Council Gallery, 1986).

[20] For example, a number of the books it includes were put out by institutional publishers, not artists.

As Simon Cutts observed, the title of the first section of *The Artist Publisher*, "Self-publishing as a Critical Alternative," could have been that of the whole exhibition, since the artists presented intended "to subvert an 'Establishment,'"[22] namely the one defending "the fine art factors." The books listed, including those issued by Coracle Press (but very few by Something Else Press) therefore proposed a "critical alternative," and like Mail Art were "a means to disseminate ideas/images outside the rigid Gallery/Publishing House machinery."

Dick Higgins, for his part, while largely sharing the above ideas, practiced them very differently for ten years (and in a hundred or so books), because of the very distinctive way he conceived his subversive relationship with the establishment. This was obviously inspired by the Fluxus utopia of art which, by penetrating all areas of life, would change it from within. As Barbara Moore notes,[23] Higgins's conception of publishing was based on the strategy of the wolf in sheep's clothing. In other words—and Higgins said as much more than once—he had to give the books he published the physical appearance of normal books very well made, so they would be accepted by the book trade and blend into the decor of contemporary life (to the point of being sold in supermarkets, hoped Higgins). So the Something Else Press's attitude to the establishment was the opposite of the Coracle Press's, since it entailed imitating, at least externally, a product recognized as legitimate. Dick Higgins denied wanting to infiltrate the establishment (and so compromising himself with it). But he could only do this by defining the establishment as something paradoxically not established, hence transformable by those who come from outside: "In capitalist societies, an establishment is not a self-constituted closed circle, trying to repel outsiders. It is a circle of specialists designated by market forces and, to a lesser extent, elected by their peers"[24] to direct public opinion. With a touch of naivety, Higgins explained that in February 1966 he sent the first issue of *The Something Else Press Newsletter*, containing his article "Intermedia," to three thousand people with this hope: "By acting as if you belong to the establishment [...] perhaps you will be judged as valid as the accepted establishment." He concluded: "And that has enabled me to be considered, if only for a time, as a potential member of the establishment."[25] In those days, among political activists, notably Trotskyists, such a strategy, appropriate for minority currents, was termed "entryism."

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[21] A volume of unpublished interviews with publishers of the 60s and 70s is in preparation, to be issued by Éditions Incertain Sens (University of Rennes 2). It concludes a four-year program (2013–2016) of research into the first publishers of artists' books, under the direction of Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, with the support of Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord.

[22] *The Artist Publisher*, 5 (also for the following quotations).

[23] Barbara Moore, "Some Things Else about Something Else," unpag.

[24] "Dick Higgins, la Something Else Press," interview with Christian Xatrec, 18.

[25] Ibid.

Consequently, the model to follow, in Higgins's eyes, was commercial publishing, even in imitating its social respectability. We can again quote Barbara Moore, since her reaction, when Dick Higgins invited her to be his editor as soon as he rented an office, was significant:

> "I thought it was some kind of joke. In those days founders of small presses didn't rent offices and 'hire' editors. They worked from their homes and collaborated with friends. [...] But I'm not sure Dick actually used the adjective 'small.'"[26]

The books he published, as we know, were refined objects: the cover might be hard or soft (in this case a cloth cover protected by a dust jacket), on which was printed the blurb, as was done for bookstore books, and often a large number of pages and standard format. Since Something Else Press publications were normally intended for a wide readership, their print runs were quite large (usually around three thousand copies, sometimes even more, not including reissues). Finally, the materials were of good quality so that the books would last without deteriorating, "You don't know, when you look at the books of my colleagues [!], if the paper has always been yellowed or was once white. Mine were always made out of the best materials, so they last."[27]

Dick Higgins was perhaps the most "professional" of artist publishers, but probably the least representative. He created a strange mix between a Fluxus subversive project and the conformity of commercial publishing. This is the challenge with which any search for an equation between art and life has to measure itself: it is not easy for art to penetrate life without getting lost in it.

Simon Cutts also lavishes great care on the materials used in the books he publishes, the quality of bindings and paper, the excellence of typefaces and printing and the elegance of the books. But his strategy is the opposite and frankly more logical. He deliberately established a style of nonconformist books, whose slight impertinence is obvious even before one gets their point. Their appearance immediately announces their "alternative" character compared to commercial books. They are issued in small formats (most often pocket-sized, like notebooks), in bright, pure colors and have the homemade or handmade appearance.

This explains why the print runs have always been low, at least when compared with those of ordinary editions or at Something Else Press: between one hundred and three hundred copies. This enables us to see the importance of diffusion in a new perspective, though Simon Cutts has titled his collection of writings on the book *Some Forms of Availability*.[28] Here lies the paradox characteristic of Coracle Press: this purported availability is limited in advance by books with an artisanal component. While being rather cheap, they are often numbered and signed, a fact that, incidentally, also makes it necessary to moderate Cutts's claims to have made a breach, as mentioned above, with the values and usage of the "fine arts." At Coracle Press, the small press of the sixties and seventies failed to sever all its ties with the tradition of the private presses, born in Britain in the late nineteenth century.

[26] Barbara Moore, "Some Things Else about Something Else," unpag.

[27] Jacques Donguy, "Entretien avec Dick Higgins," 23.

[28] Ibid.

With some slight exaggeration, disregarding the complete difference in their aesthetics, we could say that Simon Cutts's enterprise recalls something of the disturbing discrepancy we find in William Morris, between his militant commitment to socialism, including his understanding of his publishing work as a collaborative process, and the reality of his published books, handmade by resurrecting ancient skills and thus necessarily restricted to very small print runs, hence to a tiny public.

These two antithetical examples embody two extreme positions among artist publishers, and each entails its share of paradox. The "artisanal" alternative of Coracle Press, in the name of a critical project, discreetly rediscovered the elitist tradition of "the art of the book." The "commercial" alternative of Something Else Press, in the name of the imperative of distribution, ran the risk of siding with what it was intended to criticize. Between the two, there was room for a great variety of positions and publishing styles, as many as there were publishers.

Publishing as Artistic Practice: The Strictly Artistic Challenge

To conclude, we must come at last to the crucial question, which was implicitly assumed to have been resolved, though it is not self-evident. In what sense can we speak of publishing as an artistic practice? What is the actual significance of an artist turning to publishing, if this significance is not expressed solely by the social or professional identity of the person who undertakes this project? How to move beyond the incantatory repetition, rarely justified, especially among the younger generation, that "publishing is an artistic practice"?

The artist's edition is an artistic practice only if it is deliberately involved in an overall art project that encompasses publishing among other activities. That is why, for example, Hansjörg Mayer, although being an artist and a publisher, is not considered an "artist publisher" strictly speaking because his publishing work is separate from his art work, even though he has published artists whose work he came across when he was a concrete poet, then a filmmaker and a photographer. Publishing only acquires an artistic significance in relation to the guiding purpose that confers its coherence on a whole artistic process, however composite its manifestations. In other words, it does not suffice to say, as we did at the beginning, that art in the sixties and seventies became a completely open multipurpose activity, which could even include publishing among other "activities" (to borrow from Allan Kaprow this word deliberately as broad and commonplace as possible). If we left it at that, we would simply have to conclude that, faced with the same context, artists respond to it in similar ways—which can be sociologically true but is aesthetically false: there is a strong visual identity in all that comes out from each artist's press, just as there is a strong visual identity in the other manifestations of each one's work (poetry, objects, environments, actions, etc.). And it is this that is *artistically* relevant.

So if it is true that in the 1960s–70s, publishing was part of the extension of an artistic activity whose apparent unity had been fragmented, to interpret the properly artistic meaning of the work of each artist one has to seek that unity on another level, both deeper and more personal. It has to be found in the guiding idea, whether explicit or not, which urged a given artist to take on this fragmentation in a singular way. In other words, it has to be found in what might be called the artist's *Kunstwollen* ("artistic will" or "artistic volition," depending on how one chooses to translate it). Borrowing this concept from Alois Riegl, and commenting on it in a famous 1920 text,[29] Panofsky emphasized its theoretical usefulness. It enables one not to stop at an explanation of art by its external determinations (in our case the historical conditions of the redefinition of art and the artist in the 1960s–70s, the nature of the various activities that it entailed, the expansion of the "small press," and other contextual factors that allowed all that). Conversely it helps us characterize the unity of the "artistic volition" that organizes art from within, in both form and content, and does so in different ways for each artist. In a given historical situation that influenced them all simultaneously, each made an idiosyncratic response, which is why their works differ. To this degree, publishing is always "a conceptual art project," to quote the formula proposed by Leif Eriksson in order to define the relation between his publishing work and his work as a visual artist. "With my press I wanted to do something completely different from what I had been doing, like graphic prints and traditional visual art. The publishing press as a conceptual art project."[30] What does the phrase "a conceptual art project" mean here? Not just a more conceptual aspect of the work, let alone a kind of printed Conceptual art, but an intellectual project that is expressed through this channel, among others which all together make up the whole, more or less homogeneous (in this case rather heterogeneous), which is identified as the *work* of this or that person, in the fullest sense of the term.

The methodological consequence to be drawn from this is as follows. To carry out a study not of the phenomenon of artists' presses in general, but the unique way each artist takes part in it by establishing a style, a style of publications visually and intellectually identifiable as is the rest of his work, the right approach would be not to treat the question of publishing separately, but to consider it from the perspective of all the artwork by the artist in question, of which it is but a part. Otherwise publishing is not an artistic practice, just the occupation of an artist (or of anyone else).

Translated by Richard Sadleir

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[29] Erwin Panofsky, "Der Begriff des Kunstwollens," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* XIV (1920): 321–339, trans. Kenneth J. Northcott & Joel Snyder, "The Concept of Artistic Volition," *Critical Inquiry* (Autumn 1981): 17–33.

[30] Leif Eriksson, "A Very Brief Story About Swedish Booked Art," in *Outside of a Dog. Paperbacks & Other Books by Artists*, ed. Clive Phillpot and Sune Nordgren (Gateshead: Baltic, The Centre for Contemporary Art, 2003), unpag.

Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher:

Publishing as an Alternative Artistic Practice

Antoine Lefebvre

In November 2014, I finished a PhD dissertation titled "Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher: Publishing as an Alternative Artistic Practice,"[1] and this idea of alternative art became a focus of my research.[2] This PhD thesis is research of a special kind, which does not exist in most countries, as it is neither the research of art history nor art philosophy, but the research of visual art, made from an artist researcher's point of view. The hardest part of this exercise is that you have to elaborate theory by studying your own artistic practice, which is often influenced by the theory you are reading and the ideas you are developing. Knowing this, I created *La Bibliothèque Fantastique* (or *LBF*) in 2009, a publishing structure for artist books that issued more than a hundred artists' publications until I decided to end it in 2013 to focus on the writing of my dissertation.

The specificity of *LBF* is that its publications are free and downloadable from a website[3] so that everyone can print them at home. Most of these books are exclusive productions. The others are reprints of works that are important for the history of artists' publications. The purpose of *LBF* is to offer a view on books expressed by books themselves. Its works are made of excerpts of other works, with pages, sentences, and words met in a stroke of good fortune. *LBF* is an artistic venture, a commercial artwork, and a laboratory for my research that allowed me to create new artworks by over thirty different artists. The main question I tried to answer researching my own artistic practice is: Why, and more importantly, how is this publishing work an artwork? This is how I discovered that publishing could be considered as an alternative artistic practice. Since Marcel Duchamp's ready-made, it doesn't seem like an artist has to prove that something is an artwork, he just has to say so. But it was important for me to find out what could make this project art in the eyes of others. Should it be because my role as a publisher is creative, because the books are shown in an exhibition setting, or because they express a strong voice, as an artist would in his work? To answer that, I focused on showing how this approach could be considered an alternative, and tried to create a definition of the artist publisher that I hope other artist publishers will see themselves in.

As intertextuality is one of the important concepts in this research, it was important to me that the form of the dissertation could create connections between books. The dissertation is 750 pages, which I divided into four volumes in a silkscreen case. Each one carries different types of information and complements the others. The first is a catalog of all the publications and ephemera produced by *LBF* during its four years of existence. Each of the publications is presented with a reproduction of its cover, a full bibliographic reference, and a small presentation text. The texts are not explanations that one would need to read in order to understand the works, but rather anecdotes and background history that led to the creation of those specific artworks. This volume is the best source of information on the books of *LBF* as most of them don't have a colophon and very few paratext.

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[1] Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait of the Artist as a Publisher, Publishing as an Alternative Artistic Practice" (Ph.D. diss., Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2014), http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis.

[2] Alternative art is here intended as a type of art that can exist outside of the traditional system of art (i. e., the art market, the art object, the institutions, and even outside of the representation).

[3] "La Bibliothèque Fantastique," accessed August 11, 2015, www.labibliothequefantastique.net.

The second volume is composed of interviews conducted with eight people who I consider good representatives of alternative art. Those persons are not necessarily artists, but their actions within art contribute to show a different side of art, or to bring art where it hasn't been before. This volume gives a definition of alternative art through a wide range of examples, as these eight people work to change the definition of art and to make it broader. They are Ben Kinmont (artist, publisher, and antiquarian bookseller), Matthew Stadler (writer and co-founder of Publication Studio), Filip Noterdaeme (artist, writer, and director of the Homeless Museum of Art), Bettina Funcke (writer and co-founder of the Continuous Project group), Ghislain Mollet-Viéville (art agent[4]), Dana Wyse (artist), Bernard Brunon (artist and house painter) and Jean-Claude Moineau (art theoretician). All the interviewees tend to create their own status by mixing activities that one wouldn't think compatible. The result of their actions is always an extended definition of art.

The third volume presents photographic documents showing how *LBF* books have been displayed in fairs, exhibitions, shops, and other places. Displaying books in an exhibition white cube is complicated for three reasons: first, people are not used to touching objects in an exhibition space; second, an exhibition is usually not a comfortable place to read; and third, the books that you allow people to touch should be replaceable, as they will surely be damaged. The solution I found was to hang the *LBF* books on nails, so visitors could take them in their hands and browse through them. The printed books are hole punched in the upper left corner so they can be taken off the wall and read. They are hung regularly to fill all available space so the library can spread [fig. 1].[5] As the files for the books are freely downloadable, there are no "original" copies of the books of *LBF*, so the displayed copies are printed each time by the venue producing the installation.

The fourth volume is the actual thesis, an attempt to create a definition of the "artist publisher" using the experience of *La Bibliothèque Fantastique* as a basis for my research. The following quote from "La Bibliothèque Fantastique" ("The Fantasia of the Library") by Michel Foucault was an important inspiration to me, as I used it as a guide to create *LBF*:

"The imaginary now resides between the book and the lamp. The fantastic is no longer a property of the heart, nor is it found among the incongruities of nature; it evolves from the accuracy of knowledge, and its treasures lie dormant in the documents. Dreams are no longer summoned with closed eyes, but in reading; and a true image is now a product of learning:

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[4] For Ghislain Mollet-Viéville, an art agent is someone who advocates for a particular vision of art, in his case Conceptual dematerialized art. Since 1975, Mollet-Viéville has been a great support for several generations of French Conceptual artists by offering them a place to experiment in his own apartment. His old apartment is now restaged in the Mamco museum in Geneva as part of the permanent collection with all the Conceptual and Minimal artworks of his collection. See http://www.conceptual-art.net/, accessed September 29, 2015.

[5] "A library is print in its gaseous state filling every available space, and then increasing the pressure." Craig Dworkin, *The Perverse Library* (York: Information as Material, 2010), 14.

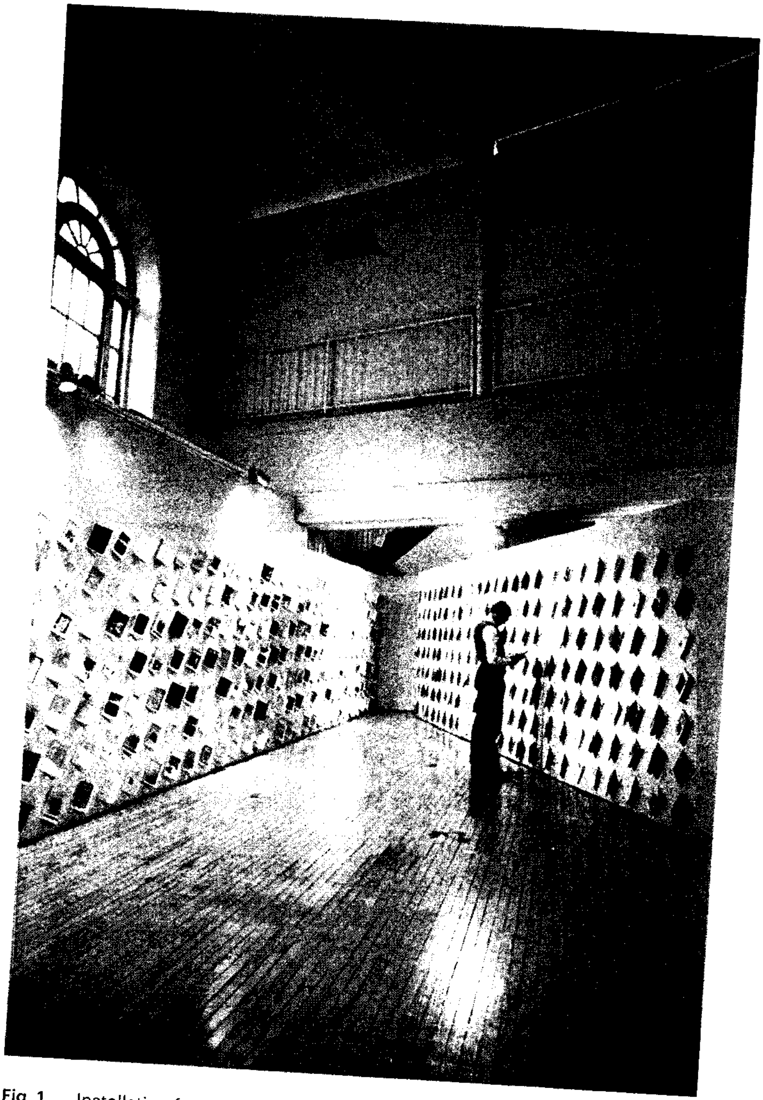

Fig. 1. Installation for the video presentation of *La Bibliothèque Fantastique*, New York 2012. Photo: Lucie Rocher, CC-BY-SA, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/1.0.

it derives from words spoken in the past, exact recensions, the amassing of minute facts, monuments reduced to infinitesimal fragments, and the reproductions of reproductions. In the modern experience, these elements contain the power of the impossible. Only the assiduous clamor created by repetition can transmit to us what only happened once. The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is a phenomenon of the library."

Michel Foucault, "The Fantasia of the Library," 1967.[6]

[6] Michel Foucault, "The Fantasia of the Library" (1967), in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 87–109, 90–91. A bilingual version of this text is available on the *LBF* website.

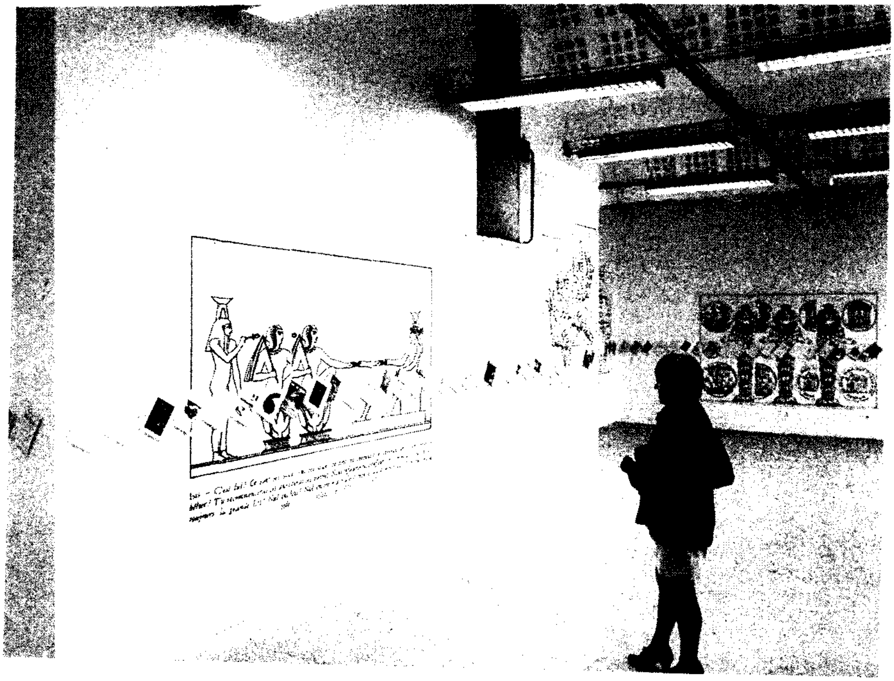

Fig. 2. Installation *Ligne* éditoriale *& La Tentation de saint Antoine*, made for the PhD presentation, Paris 2014. Photo: Antoine Lefebvre, CC-BY-SA, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/1.0.

The photos of the installation I did for the defense of my dissertation can be informative in explaining how this Foucault text influenced my publishing process. This installation is composed of two overlapping elements: a line made out of all the books of *LBF* hung chronologically on nails, and underneath them, a series of giant photocopies of nineteenth century engravings [fig. 2]. These are the images that Foucault had printed alongside his text since the very first publication in 1964 as an afterword to the German translation of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* by Gustave Flaubert.[7] In his text, Foucault demonstrates how Flaubert's book is made out of myths and characters borrowed from books of the writer's library. Flaubert especially used the book of the German archeologist Friedrich Creuzer *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*[8] where the tenth and last volume is composed of engravings representing all the gods from all around the world who come to attempt to make Saint Anthony lose faith. This book was a great source of inspiration for Flaubert, who used these reproductions to nourish the description of Saint Anthony's temptations. This process is what Foucault calls in his text "a phenomenon of the library," a combination of a lot of books from the writer's personal library mixed to make a new book.

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[7] Michel Foucault, afterword to *Die Versuchung des Heiligen Antonius*, by Gustave Flaubert (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1964), 217–251.

[8] There is no English translation of this work by Creuzer to my knowledge. The title would translate as *Symbolism and mythology of the ancient peoples, particularly the Greeks*. The French version read by Flaubert was translated from the German by Joseph Daniel Guigniaut: Friedrich Creuzer, *Religions de l'antiquité, Considérées principalement dans leurs formes symboliques et mythologiques*, vol. 4, part 2 (Paris: Kossbühl, 1841).

The first part of the thesis is built like a mystery novel around the death of the author. It starts by a discovery made by a key witness: the librarian, whose position allows him to see the disappearance of the author first hand. The main idea of this first part is that this intertextual work that Flaubert did and that Foucault calls a phenomenon is similar to the work of the publisher who organizes his publishing as an accumulation of text, title, books, covers, and authors like a librarian would. By doing so, the artist publisher creates a dialogue between these elements that is essential to creating new meaning for his artworks. These links between texts that were thoroughly studied by structuralist thinkers in the 1960s do not express themselves in the library but rather in the mind of the reader as Roland Barthes demonstrated in his famous text "The Death of the Author."[9] The crime scene therefore is the mind of the reader, which is for Barthes the "place where [the] multiplicity is collected, united."[10] All the *LBF* books have a cover borrowed from an existing book, because a certain amount of appropriation is indispensable to create new meaning between books. But these mechanisms of appropriation challenge the notion of authorship. This type of interaction between texts and books does not leave books unharmed and the biggest victim of this game is the author whose very existence is threatened by the appropriation phenomenon.

The appropriation is the murder weapon by which the author came to die. But it is also the tool that will bring an unexpected twist to this story: the author is not dead! His presence continues to haunt us like a ghost as he rises from the dead as a meta-author. Indeed, in his *Metaphysical Principles of Law,* Kant defines the book as "a Writing which contains a Discourse addressed by some one to the Public, through visible signs of Speech." He therefore defines the author as "he who speaks to the public in his own name." Kant then gives a definition of the publisher, which makes him a meta-author: "He who addresses the writing to the public in the name of the author is the publisher."[11] The publisher is therefore an author who expresses himself through authors, using their speech to build his, and the artist publisher is a meta-artist who creates his own work by arranging or curating the works of other artists.[12]

The second part of the thesis focuses on the nature of the works published by *LBF*. By developing the genealogy of these publications, I found Stéphane Mallarmé to be a precursor in the idea of authors making books, instead of just writing texts.[13] Comparing the different definitions of artists' books, I wanted to find the links between this particular type of artists' publications, counter culture, and subcultures. The goal of this second part is to define a new category of artists' publications that resides at the intersection of artists'

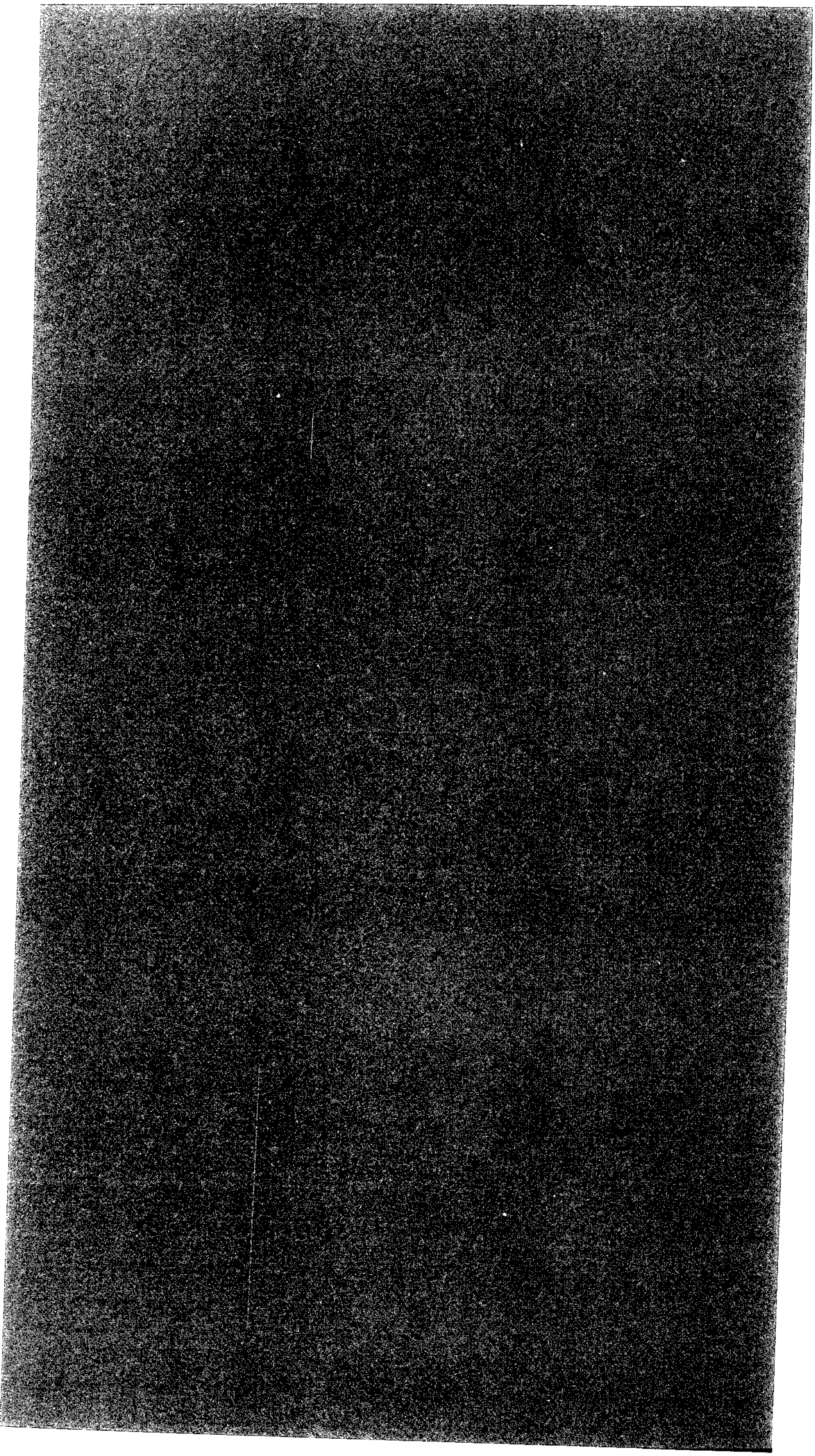
[9] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Aspen* no. 5–6 (fall–winter 1967). See also Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) and Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art,* trans. Thomas Gora and Alice A. Jardine (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

[10] Barthes, "The Death of the Author."

[11] Immanuel Kant, "Metaphysical Principles of Law" (1797), in *The Philosophy of Law, An Exposition of the Fundamental Principles of Jurisprudence as the Science of Right* (Edinburgh: W. Hastie, 1887), 129–130.

[12] See Hanna Kuusela's and Annette Gilbert's contributions in this volume.

[13] In "The New Art of Making Books," *Kontexts* no. 6–7 (1975), Ulises Carrión defines bookmaking as this: "In the old art the writer writes texts. In the new art the writer makes books." Mallarmé would therefore be one of the first examples of this "new art of making books" that Carrion links to artists' books. See also Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait of the Artist," 131–154.



books and the Do It Yourself ethos. I call artzines the artists' publications that are produced in a Do It Yourself spirit and therefore belong to zines, but which also have a strong connection to contemporary art, and the history of avant-gardes.[14] The artzines are a subcategory within zines, alongside punk zines, queer zines, perzines, etc., but almost all the zine categories can also be found within artzines—with a little artistic twist.

Since its inception, many critics have considered artists' publications as alternative spaces. Artist publisher Simon Cutts even called them a "critical alternative" in 1986 in the catalog of his exhibition *The Artist Publisher*.[15] But before him, Kate Linker had already designated the artist book as an alternative space, because it is an alternative to the exhibition space as well as to the art market.[16] Barbara Moore, John Hendricks and Guy Schraenen also compared the printed page to the exhibition space and to artist-run spaces.[17] But artists' publications are not alternatives only because they offer another space for art, where art can be shown on the artist's own terms. They are also an alternative, to a mainstream or dominant culture, because some of them, such as artzines, are influenced and share history with the counterculture rebellion and some subcultures.

In the third part I define the creative process of the artist publisher as an alternative artistic practice for several different reasons. First, because creating a commercial venture as an artwork places the artist publisher in a history of artist organizations founded by artists who refused to comply with the demands of the traditional art world. Working with the Sorbonne and the CNRS Art&Flux research team was the occasion for me to address the economic aspect of publishing, which is often idealized when it comes to artists' books. Commentators tend to see them as a very democratic form of art because they are cheap to buy. But they are only cheap from the point of view of the buyer and they are very expensive to produce for the artist, even more than traditional artworks. The Art&Flux team works, among other things, on the links between art and the economy, and especially on "artist companies" which are run by artist entrepreneurs such as Iain Baxter who created *N.E. Thing Co.* in 1963. Artist entrepreneurs often have a very critical view on the economy and try to show how it could work differently. They also choose for themselves a status that will lead them to exist inside or outside of the art world but always on their own terms.[18]

This idea of alternative art therefore takes many shapes, as Robert Filliou stated in his "autriste" philosophy: "Whatever you do, do something else. Whatever you think, think something else."[19] Alternative art practices can be defined in many ways: as a different way of thinking as Filliou proposes, but I think that the places where they happen can also help to qualify them as such. The concept of heterotopia that Michel Foucault invented[20] is an accurate depiction of how artists tend to bring art into new places or "non-places," where it has never been before. Alternative art tends to happen in unexpected places, or in places that are transformed by the action of the artist.

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[14] See ibid., 155–172.

[15] Simon Cutts, *The Artist Publisher* (London: Crafts Council Gallery, 1986), 5.

[16] Kate Linker, "Artist's Book as an Alternative Space," *Studio International* 990, no. 195 (1980): 75–79.

[17] Barbara Moore and John Hendricks, "The Page as Alternative Space, 1950 to 1969," in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Rochester: Visual Studies Workshop, 1985), 91. And Guy Schraenen, "Pour une approche des espaces alternatifs (1–4)," *Artefactum* no. 8–11 (1985–1986).

[18] Yann Toma and Rose Marie Barrientos, eds., *Les Entreprises Critiques/Critical Companies* (Saint-Etienne: Cite du design, 2008).

[19] Robert Filliou, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (Köln: Kasper Koenig, 1970), 227.

But it is an artist publisher, the self-proclaimed Fluxus leader George Maciunas, who brought the most relevant concept to qualify publishing as an alternative artistic practice: Concretism is a type of art that presents objects instead of representing them. To him, concretist artists: "prefer the world of concrete reality rather than the artificial abstraction of illusionism. Thus in plastic arts, for instance, a concretist perceives and expresses a rotten tomato without changing its reality of form."[21] This definition inspired by Duchamp helped me a lot to qualify publishing as an alternative artistic practice, as it can be considered a readymade activity. It is a banal activity raised to the state of artwork by the will of an artist. To me, the definition of art lies within action. Because as Ernst Gombrich said: "There is no such thing as art, there are only artists."[22] Also, there is no use for ideas unless they are materialized in a form that can be communicated. Even the most abstract works of Conceptual art have to be transmitted to the viewer, be it in writing or orally. *LBF* is a concretist artwork because its goal is not to give a representation of a library, as you would find in a painting, a photo, or even in some installations, but rather to create a fully functional library where the accumulation of books and titles creates a discourse.

The best example of what I call alternative art is the work of Bernard Brunon, a French artist who has been living in the U.S. since the eighties. His work fits all the criteria I have just defined, as he has founded his own artistic company to act in heterotopias, spaces that he transforms by his action. He is also a concretist artist as he has always painted avoiding representation. When Brunon was a young man studying art in France, he went to the École des Beaux-Arts in Marseille to study with Claude Viallat, an artist from the Support/Surface group, known for his painting work, which questions materials in the painting process. The young Brunon was interested in Viallat's way of thinking as he was trying to make paintings that wouldn't be representations of anything. When Brunon went to live in Dallas, Texas for personal reasons, he started working some odd jobs, such as painting houses, to make a living. He then realized that when he was painting a wall for one of his clients, he was finally doing what he had always tried to do in his paintings, which is to make a painting that wouldn't be a representation. Indeed, when Brunon paints a house, he is not representing the house, but painting the world, the reality. He therefore decided that his artistic practice would be house painting, making him a sort of Conceptual painter. When I asked Brunon what part of his process was art—was it the painted wall, the act of painting, his house painting company, or the idea?—he said that all of this was his art and that he considers his whole activity as art, his “démarche.” The French word “démarche” is helpful to explain: it can be translated as approach or process, but those translations do not fully cover it. In the French word “démarche,” there is the verb “marcher,” to walk. That is why, in my work as in Brunon’s, the whole process; the whole “démarche” is the artwork, because it is active, ongoing, in movement. Because calling those alternative artistic practices readymade activities isn’t quite enough, it is also the daily work of a Conceptual painter or an artist publisher that proves again and again the pertinence of such approaches.

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[20] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces. Heterotopias," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986): 22–27.

[21] George Maciunas, "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art" (1962), in *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, ed. Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks (New York: MoMA 1988), 25–27.

[22] Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1950), 4.

Artist publishers are expected to be more creative than regular publishers, to do things differently, in an original way. In my case, it was by allowing people to download the PDF files of my books for free that I proposed a hands-on Do It Yourself experience to my readers. It was also a way for me to print only the copies that I needed. This experience was a way of expressing my point of view on art, through an extended definition of art that can invade every aspect of life. And also a way to show what I believe to be the future of publishing: the unrestricted distribution of information (through PDF files and the Free Art License)[23] and printing on demand, which is cheap and sustainable. To give a simple definition, I would say that an artist publisher is a meta-artist whose practice is to publish both his work and the work of others. The dialogue between books is a key element for any publisher in order to create meaning; but it is even more important for the artist publisher to not be only a self-publisher, because artists who only publish themselves do not create a dialogue between authors, and remain in a solitary studio practice. To create intertextuality, and the “phenomenon of library” that Foucault evokes, the artist publisher selects, edits, and organizes content in order to publish it. But publishing isn’t only to print a publication or to distribute it; it is “an essentially political act,” as Matthew Stadler stated. To him, “publication is the creation of a public,” which means that an artist publisher doesn’t only have to print artworks, but also to create the conditions for other people to see them as such.[24]

[23] The Free Art License was created by the artists Antoine Moreau and Isabelle Vodjdani with the help of lawyers. It is inspired by the world of free software and is now compatible with Creative Commons BY+SA. All the publications of *LBF* are protected by this license.

[24] “How do you make a lasting meaning for readers? How do you make a readership that cares and will care over time? In short, how do you get from publishing to publication? Publication is the creation of a public; it is an essentially political act. This public, which is more than a market, is created by deliberate acts, the circulation of texts, discussions and gatherings in physical spaces, the maintenance of a digital commons.” Matthew Stadler, “Finding Your Audience in the 21st Century,” lecture at Richard Hugo House’s Writer’s Conference, May 22, 2010, online http://vimeo.com/14888791, accessed September 29, 2015.

How I Didn't Write Any of My Books

Aurélie Noury

For books, you see, are full to the brim with books! Novels overflow with characters who write novels, essays, treatises, poems ...
You just have to lean over a little closer.
Jacques Jouet[1]

The title of this text, borrowed from two figures in French literature, is both a promise and a confession. It promises firstly to reveal a method, the same one that Roussel set out in his famous but no less enigmatic *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*. The promised revelation of a formula—if indeed there was one—is sure to draw the reader in, but not to offer the writer any useful recipes for success. The main reason for this disappointment is disarming in its simplicity: Raymond Roussel—this much is certain—did *write* his books. While this fact does indeed support the existence of a supposed method, it also puts you off from using it. Even if followed to the letter, and assimilated to the point that the methods revealed become seen as one's own, thankfully productive, source of inspiration, they are not sufficient to write a book. Raymond Roussel backpedals on the infallibility of a "process" which he himself qualifies as "essentially [...] poetic," because "[s]till, one needs to know how to use it. For just as one can use rhymes to compose good or bad verses, so one can use this method to produce good or bad works."[2]

Although Raymond Roussel undoubtedly does honor the promise formulated in his title—he does indeed give us a working writing system based on a certain number of rather Oulipian linguistic tricks—in the subject under discussion here, the mere mention of the title almost simultaneously opposes the statistical reality of the method with its counterweight: of the books whose method of writing I am hoping to make explicit, not one is named. And it's here that the method, the unveiling of which is to the author's great credit, is suddenly tainted with a certain dishonesty, mentioned by Marcel Bénabou in *Why I Have Not Written Any of My Books,* anticipating reservations probably voiced after reading the title:

> "When [the author] declares that he has not written any of his books, he can have meant, depending on which element of his affirmation is emphasized: that he has had his books written by others, a practice which is not rare and from which one does not emerge debased as one once did; that he has written the books of others, a practice at least as common as the preceding one, albeit clearly less well regarded; that he has contented himself with conceiving of his books without going so far as to commit them to paper; or, finally, that he has written something other than what one normally terms a book."[3]

But where the *why* of Marcel Bénabou removes any taint of fraud from his methods, as it is a kind of admission of inability, the deliberate choice of *how*, dealing not with causes but with the means, raises—not without cause—the suspicion of shameless cheating at one time or another during the enterprise.

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[1] Jacques Jouet, cited by Paul Braffort, "Les Bibliothèques invisibles," in *La Bibliothèque oulipienne*, vol. III (Paris: Seghers, 1990), 246. Unless otherwise indicated all translations by Russell Richardson.

[2] Raymond Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, trans. Trevor Winkfield (Boston: Exact Change, 1995), 16; originally published as *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres* (Paris: Pauvert, 1985), 23.

[3] Marcel Bénabou, *Why I Have Not Written Any of My Books*, trans. David Kornacker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 14; originally published as *Pourquoi je n'ai écrit aucun de mes livres* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 18–19.

When you read the book by Marcel Bénabou, the four interpretations he provides for his title fall one by one. The author did not call upon a ghostwriter, any more than he was one himself; he did not renounce the publication of his manuscripts—though this hypothesis is closest to reality; nor did he choose another form of writing than that offered by a book. He would be a writer without works—and if there were an oeuvre—as we have to admit that this book does exist—it would be entirely devoted to its own achievement, or approaching its vicinity. And Marcel Bénabou would join the ranks of abstinent authors, having created a non-productive, non-realized, and non-realizing art.

Talking about his own *oeuvre*, Cervantes said that one should also admire him for what he had not written. This statement contains in itself the whole idea of a counter-literature, a blank or hollow literature, stolen from our hands and our sight for the simple reason that it was never written. Faced with the thousands of volumes lined up to infinity on the library shelves, a work is also everything that was not, or could not be written down on paper: its failures, its hesitations, its regrets, its projects, its fantasies, its ideal even, filling far more than pages, but entire lives. There are books, then, that we must be content with imagining: *Le Traité du dandysme* (On Dandyism) promised by Charles Baudelaire, the six *Célestes* (Luminaries), corresponding to the six *Diaboliques* (*The She Devils*) by Barbey d'Aurevilly, or again the novel *Vita Nova* by Roland Barthes of which we know only the first eight pages; and there are authors with the special status as writers of unwritten books: Jacques Rigaut, a member of the Dada movement whose *Papiers posthumes* (Posthumous Papers), for better or worse, form a volume, remained paralyzed when faced with the creative act. The same fate awaited Jacques Vaché's oeuvre—that is, his correspondence with figures like André Breton—which contained in its few lines the foundations of surrealism. As for Joseph Joubert, he left a few articles, some letters, and a total devotion to literature. He dreamed his entire life of his book, which he prepared and began ceaselessly, pouring into his copious notes an ideal he could only long for. He only encountered literature on its peripheries, first as the reader of others, as he was a great admirer of Denis Diderot and Restif de la Bretonne, as well as being a habitué of writers' circles, then as the reader of his own, unattainable works, which he always seemed to hold at arm's length.

Except you must actually begin, as Henry James tried to convince himself: "[B]egin it - begin it! Don't talk *about* it only, and around it."[4] But all through his book, Marcel Bénabou never finishes beginning, to the point where—an irony of sorts—a book appears. So, the reason why he never wrote any of his books, at least as he could have imagined them, has nothing to do with pseudonyms, or with plagiarism, but with the vertigo caused by all the books already written and the premonition of those to come in the flux of an "ever ongoing production."[5] The paralysis is partly due to quantity: "Perhaps you are among those who, like me, can no longer go to a bookstore without feeling a twinge of sorrow, but who don't leave without feeling a certain uneasiness either, indeed a sort of virtual nausea: so many books."[6] And, partly due to quality, in that we all could have been the objects of our own jealousy if only we could have been bothered: "Will I dare bring up in passing the feeling of frustration that certain books left in me? Not because they disappointed me; quite the contrary. But I couldn't keep myself from thinking as I read that once again I had missed an opportunity. It had, of course, been my place to write this book I had just finished reading," to end on, "more convinced than ever of the absolute uselessness of my efforts."[7]

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[4] F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock, eds., *The Notebooks of Henry James* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 110.

Yet this labyrinth of books, where Marcel Bénabou situates the roots of his silence, where the talented get discouraged and the mediocre give up, is my opportunity. Because the books which I have not written may well be found there.

From one labyrinth, another.[8]

Bénabou's vertigo is as nothing compared to the limitless library envisaged by Jacques Jouet,[9] the potential library that would unofficially constitute the different kinds of imaginary books set within real books. More than the old game of story-within-a-story, this would involve books imagined at the very heart of a fiction, functioning as a motif. The author could indeed, at some point in his story, have need of a book. For this, he has two choices: the first is to use a real book, written by an actual author, published, and therefore palpable. The reading list of Madame Bovary is of this type, as are those of Proust's narrator, or the books in the library of Alfred Jarry's Dr. Faustroll. In this way, the *Paul and Virginia* read by Emma, the *François le Champi* discovered at the Guermantes', or *The Songs of Maldoror* on the shelves of Dr. Faustroll's library are, without a doubt, identical to those that we have read, or could read. Therefore, in the same way that an author can develop his or her characters in real places, which the reader can then physically visit, actual titles can occur in a story because a character came across them, obtained them, read them, or wrote them. Actually, to choose one's reading according to the hero of a story would be a lovely project.

The second choice would be to invent a book, giving it at least a title, or in the vast majority of cases, a title and an author, whether they are both imaginary or made-up in tandem with a real title or real author, where the hybrid would constitute a third way of creating the book-within-the-book. For example, Jean d'Ormesson in *The Glory of the Empire* attributes books he has made up himself to real authors: *The Life of Alexis* to Ernest Renan and *The Death*

[5] Marcel Bénabou, *Why I Have Not Written Any of My Books*, 8; *Pourquoi je n'ai écrit aucun de mes livres*, 12.
[6] Ibid., 51–52; Ibid., 43.
[7] Ibid., 56, 57; Ibid., 48.
[8] [A subtle nod of the head to Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *D'un château l'autre*, perhaps translatable as *From One Castle, Another* rather than *Castle to Castle*. Trans.]
[9] See the epitaph to this text.

of Bruince to Georg Büchner,[10] while Jean Paul makes his character Maria Wutz *write*, in his way, works which he could not personally obtain, such as the *Treatise on Space and Time* or the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[11] In a similar way, certain characters invented by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares manage to *rewrite* actual earlier works through the process of "deliberate anachronism"[12] or by annexation. Such is the case of the celebrated Pierre Menard who has a sizeable bibliography in Borges's short story in which one finds a section of *Don Quixote*, or the case of César Paladión, "annex[ing] a complete opus"[13] like *The Hound of the Baskervilles* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Alongside these conjuring tricks that require reading short stories, precisely because in them Borges reveals the ways in which his characters can pull off such feats, is the dizzying catalog of imaginary books attributed to fictitious authors. In no particular order: *The Bee* by Stanisla Beren; *Right of Passage* by Hugh Vereker; *Olympi Glossarium* by Louis Toljan; *Roof Gardening* by Roger-Marin Courtial des Pereires; *Examination of Christianity* by Louis Hervieu; *Maya* by Gustav Aschenbach; *Petites Introductions* by Lucien Lormier or *Mad Tryst* by Launcelot Canning;[14] without ever being able to give a definitive list because as soon as we start making it, the tragicomic possibility appears that fictitious books are infinitely more numerous than real ones.

For someone who begins to look for these books, one can be found every day, to the point of orienting your reading around them, and nourishing it mainly from this quest. To the extent, also, of discovering an unexplored potential, enticing with each new title discovered, but invariably dropped when merely named. For in the vast majority of cases, the reality of the imaginary book goes no further than the mention of its title and the author's name, falling away like a stage set of which only the visible façade has been built. But for the person who looks a little closer, the "monument" can "complete" itself[15] and the inclusion of an imaginary book inside a real book becomes truly interesting where the author builds clues and verisimilitudes around it that, more than just adding to a fiction, can actually give it form.

There are many approaches. It can begin in the universe of the bibliographical catalog, and the means at its disposal. To a simple alphabetical list made up of the names of authors and titles, a date, a place, and a publisher can be added. To quote among many other examples: Skip Canell, *Pessimism*, New York, Indolence Books Ltd., 1948; Amadeu Inácio De Almeida Prado, *Um ourives das palavras*, Lisbonne, Cedros Vermelhos, 1975; Benjamin Jordane, *Fumées sans feux*, Paris, Capitaine éd., 1971; Carlo Olgiati, *Le Métabolisme historique*, Novare, La Redentina, 1931; or such as Vadim Vadimovich, *Podarok Otchizne*, New York, Turgenev Publishing House, 1950,[16] which confer the legitimacy of a scientific reference on a work, and almost incline us to go into the libraries, adding the translators: Robert Nolke, “The stimulating interlocutor,” in *Lost and Recovered Prose*, translation by Marc Montmirail, Maillot, 1971; or printers: Carlos Anglada, *The Copybooks of the Diver*, printed by Le Minotaure, Éd. Probeta, 1939; and illustrators: Argentino Schiaffino, *Solitude*, prologue by Morazán, illustrations by Berta Macchio Morazán, Buenos Aires, 1987.[17] If the hypothetical Pierre Marteau has published an excessive number of all too real books, some authors co-opt actual publishers for the edition of works imagined for their characters. Thus, in *Aurélien* by Aragon, the books by Paul Denis are published by Sans-Pareil for *Défense d’Entrée* and by Editions Kra for *Les Promenades Noires*. Even better, Enrique Vila-Matas in the fanciful bibliography concluding his *A Brief History of Portable Literature*, bets on the future release of an unpublished work by Francis Picabia called *Widows and Soldiers* (*Veuves et Militaires*) of which he proclaims the “imminent release at the José Corti bookstore.”[18]

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[10] Jean d'Ormesson, *The Glory of the Empire*, trans. Barbara Blay (London: Book Club Associates, 1975); originally published as *La Gloire de l'Empire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

[11] Jean Paul, "Leben des vergnügten Schulmeisterlein Maria Wutz in Auenthal. Eine Art Idylle" (Life of the Cheerful Schoolmaster Maria Wutz), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. I-1 (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1960), 422–462.

[12] Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote," in *Ficciones*, trans. Anthony Bonner et al. (New York: Grove Press / Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), 54; originally published as "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," in *Obras Completas*, vol. I: 1923–1949 (Mallorca, Barcelona: Emecé Editores, 1996), 450.

[13] Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, "Homage to Cesar Paladion," in *Chronicles of Bustos Domecq*, trans. Norman Thomas Di Giovanni (New York: Dutton, 1979), 22; originally published as "Homenaje a César Paladión," in *Crónicas de Bustos Domecq*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S. A., 1968), 19.

[14] Respectively cited in the following works: Michel Déon, *Un déjeuner de soleil (Where are you Dying Tonight?)*; Henry James, *The Figure in the Carpet*; Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus*; Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Mort à crédit (Death on Credit)*; Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet*; Thomas Mann, *Tod in Venedig (Death in Venice)*; Marcel Aymé, *Les Tiroirs de l'inconnu (The Drawers of the Unknown Man)*; Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

[15] [See Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pécuchet*: "the page must fill itself, the 'monument' completes itself..." Trans.]

To the simple mention of bibliographies, one might add the material conditions as noted in sales catalogs. Such include the famous *Catalog of Count de Fortsas’s Library* (*Catalogue de la bibliothèque de M. le comte de Fortsas*),[19] of which Renier Chalon was one of the main instigators, which informs us for each title of the format, the number of pages, even the binding: “12mo 2 part. of 115 & 210 p., illus., bdg. orig. Red Morocco” for the *The Memoirs of Abbot D. M. R. D. F. A. L.* (*Mémoires de l’abbé D. M. R. D. F. A. L.*), or “4to of 695 p., illus., bdg. blue velvet, with corners and clasp of silver” for *Promptuarium antiquitatum Trevirensium*. The descriptions can go as far as detailing eventual “wormholes in the lower margin” or the “inkblot on p. 21.” We can even go beyond the dedicated, and of necessity abbreviated, language of the catalogs to find the fully-fledged descriptions that some authors give their works. In *53 Days*, Georges Perec precisely describes the manuscript of Robert Serval:

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[16] Respectively cited in the following works: Enrique Vila-Matas, *A Brief History of Portable Literature*, trans. Thomas Bunstead and Anne McLean (New York: New Directions, 2015); originally published as *Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil* (Barcelona : Ed. Anagrama, 2002); Pascal Mercier, *Night Train to Lisbon*, trans. Barbara Harshav (New York: Grove Press, 2008); originally published as *Nachtzug nach Lissabon* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2004); Jean-Benoît Puech, *L’Apprentissage du roman* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1993); J. Rodolfo Wilcock, *The Temple of Iconoclasts*, trans. Lawrence Venuti (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2000); originally published as *La sinagoga degli iconoclasti* (Milano: Adelphi, 1972); Vladimir Nabokov, *Look at the Harlequins!* (New York, St. Louis, San Francisco, Toronto: Mc Graw-Hill, 1974).

[17] Jean-Benoît Puech, *L’Apprentissage du roman*; Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981); originally published as *Seis problemas para don Isidro Parodi* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1942); Roberto Bolaño, *Nazi Literature in the Americas*, trans. Chris Andrews (New York: New Directions, 2008); originally published as *La literatura nazi en América* (Barcelona: Seix Barral 2005).

[18] Enrique Vila-Matas, *A Brief History of Portable Literature; Historia abreviada de la literatura portátil*.

[19] The entirety of the *Catalogue d’une très riche mais peu nombreuse collection de livres provenant de la bibliothèque de feu M. le comte J.-N.-A. de Fortsas dont la vente se fera à Binche, le 10 août 1840, à onze heures du matin, en l’étude et par le ministère de Me Mourlon, Notaire, rue de l’Église, n°9,* was published in facsimile in 2005 by Éditions des Cendres.

> “It takes the form of a manuscript of 130 neatly typed pages, free of corrections, deletions or additions of any kind. There is a quite peculiar black and white photograph gummed on the front cover, which is just a sheet of shiny black plastic without the name of the book, or of the author. I presume that what it represents is a painted signboard, bearing a rather primitive but charming sign, that must be posted somewhere in the southern depths of Morocco. It depicts a semi-arid landscape, with a few traces of vegetation and a clump of trees in the far distance, against a background of sand dunes and hills. In the left foreground is a smiling native face, cut off at the bust by the picture frame; the native holds the reins of a camel entering from the left, with only the neck and head of the beast visible in profile. In the middle ground, four camel-drivers ride their mounts towards the right. Against the sky, a long arrow points rightwards beneath the legend stencilled in large letters: TIMBUKTOO 52 DAYS and above that, a legend in Arabic which presumably says the same thing, the other way round.”[20]

This gives a very precise image of the work, of which we can easily visualize the cover, more so in that Perec had envisaged using the photograph described here as the cover of his book, and that the Editions P.O.L. actually includes a reproduction on page 7.

Going one step further, Vadim Vadimovich, the writer-hero of Nabokov in *Look at the Harlequins!* goes so far as to discover “a copy of a Formosan paperback reproduced from the American edition” of his novel *A Kingdom by the Sea.* After having described this copy, he tells us about the back cover, in which he is upset by the inevitable misprints:

> “Bertram, an unbalanced youth, doomed to die shortly in an asylum for the criminal insane, sells for ten dollars his ten-year-old sister Ginny to the middle-aged bachelor Al Garden, a wealthy poet who travels with the beautiful child from resort to resort through America and other countries. A state of affairs that looks at first blush—and ‘blush’ is the right word—like a case of irresponsible perversion (described in brilliant detail never attempted before) develops by the grees [misprint] into a genuine dialogue of tender love. Garden’s feelings are reciprocated by Ginny, the initial ‘victim’ who at eighteen, a normal nymph, marries him in a warmly described religious ceremony. All seems to end honky-donky [sic!] in foreverlasting bliss of a sort fit to meet the sexual demands of the most rigid, or frigid, humanitarian, had there not been running its chaotic course, in a sheef [sheaf?] of parallel lives beyond our happy couple’s ken, the tragic tiny [destiny?] of Virginia Garden’s inconsolable parents, Oliver and [?], whom the clever author by every means in his power, prevents from tracking their daughter Dawn [sic!!]. A Book-of-the-Decade choice.”[21]

The profusion of details turns bitter when we realize that our reading has to stop here. For those who decide to hunt down imaginary books inside real books, reading the back cover, the final touch to a book that was finished and published, can be cruel. There remains that intolerable feeling of receiving something only to have it taken back. That's the fate of many imaginary books: they use an indirect mode via a more or less detailed synopsis revealing the plot rather than the entire text once given anything beyond a title, author's name, or bibliographical reference and description of the volume's condition. So, for *The Crypt*, it's the narrator of *53 Days,* hired to investigate the disappearance of the writer Robert Serval, who devotes almost thirty pages to a detailed report of his reading, presenting the setting, the characters, and the facts, with which he mingles his observations as a reader/investigator.[22]

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[20] Georges Perec, *53 Days*, trans. David Bellos, (Jaffrey: David R. Godine, 2000), 22–23; originally published as *53 jours* (Paris: P.O.L, 1989), 41–42.

[21] Vladimir Nabokov, *Look at the Harlequins!* 215–216 [square brackets in original].

In Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, one approaches the content through the commentaries of the hero Antoine Roquentin, which he gives us as he copies out his work on the Marquis of Rollebon: "*Tuesday, 30 January*: I worked from nine till one in the library. I got Chapter XII started and all that concerns Rollebon's stay in Russia up to the death of Paul I. This work is finished: nothing more to do with it until the final revision." or "*7.00 p.m.* Work Today. It didn't go too badly; I wrote six pages with a certain amount of pleasure. The more so since it was a question of abstract considerations on the reign of Paul I."[23] The peculiar example of *Les Noces* (The Wedding) by Jean Giono is quite remarkable. Here is a novel, or so it seems at first glance, literally set inside another. Indeed, Giono closes *Noé* (Noah), which is presented as a sequel to *A King Without Diversion* with the announcement of the following book in the series, entitled *Les Noces*, the plot of which he goes on to explain over about twenty pages.[24] The reader thus enters into the confidence of a story as it unfolds, while Giono sketches little by little the settings and characters at a country wedding, which he seems to be discovering along with us, and as the creator, building at the same time: "let's not get carried away [...] gently, now" (p. 845); "Stop! I have something to say about the costumes. [...] What do we imagine? After all I've said, do we imagine the peasant wedding *according to the texts*?" (p. 847); "First of all, the landscape I just described, I see it at dawn. It's the morning of the day which will be the day of *The Wedding*. I'll start at that exact time" (p. 855); and concerning the character of the father: "Like every morning, he went outside and pissed. I make him piss, *like a horse, with thick, foamy urine*" (p. 855); or the old woman: "She approached the father (I'll have to give him a name). She says... No, what she says is already the book. It's already *The Wedding*" (p. 856). This last phrase is telling. The moment he is about to make the old woman speak, Giono changes his mind, because whatever she could say "is already the book. It's already *The Wedding*," and for the time being, he only talks about the general project. This won't go much further, unfortunately, and we will have to be content with reported speech, according to Giono's words, in parentheses.[25]

[22] Georges Perec, *53 Days*, 23–48; *53 jours*, 42–68.

[23] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions, 1964), 6, 57; originally published as *La Nausée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 18, 86.

[24] Jean Giono, *Noé*, in *Œuvres romanesques complètes*, vol. III (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 844–862.

[25] "[E]verything I have to say about this *Wedding*, I have to say *in parentheses*. This seems to mean that there are some enormous parentheses which, at the end, will fill up with everything I have to say on the subject." Ibid., 847.

Because the true text is precisely what constitutes the work I have been searching for: not the words actually reported or retold, but all the words the author might have made the old woman say, and the entire *Wedding* built around them; it would also include the completed book by Antoine Roquentin, as well as *The Crypt*, liberated by another person's reading. These works are lost for the simple reason that they are incomplete. These books that I have not written will have to remain so. It does not mean, through the pretext of a synopsis or an author's note of intention, developing a text whose precise form can never be known. Nor is it exactly writing in the style of another author, of mimicking the tics of their language, or of hijacking their turns of phrase. Neither is it to extend an unfinished work, or to put forward variations. It means finding, according to the growing degrees of existence of the imaginary book, from vague allusion to quotes, passing via the detailed outline, the cases of autonomous books which contain enough information to be *written* and therefore published in an independent volume. Such books have not only a title and an author, but the entirety of their content is available, quoted at length in the body of the text, requiring just a simple copying, or involving certain literary fictions invented by a real author. This is where the possibility of editorial work to dig out these books from within other books begins, and whose reality, up to now subordinated, only depends on being put down on the page. The publisher that brings these together is called Lorem Ipsum. It takes its name from the dummy text used by printers, randomly generated as placeholder for a missing text, to aid layout and calibration of the proofs. In the same way, the publications of Lorem Ipsum are potential books, which already exist, captured with all the ease of cut-and-paste. The difficulty lies in unearthing these rare cases.

When such a book does appear, it is a small miracle. Having been blindly sought after and devoutly hoped for, the complete reading is often disappointed at the last minute. The vast majority of books that I thought I had found in their entirety evaporated with the whim of story. The main reason for these failures can be explained by the fact that the restoration of the fictive work remains subordinate to the story that hosts it, the main tale. Thus in *Lost Illusions*, Balzac only completely quotes four sonnets from the collection by Lucien Chardon entitled *The Marguerites*, precisely because the latter offers "sample sonnets" for examination by the journalist Etienne Lousteau. Thereafter, following "*Easter Daisies,*" the poet reads a second sonnet in the hope of getting some reaction from the impassive listener, then the next two after his request, "Go on" and "Read us one more sonnet." The reading of the fourth sonnet, however, is followed by "a pause, immeasurably long, as it seemed to him," which brings to an end the lecture, and by the same count, my writing.[26]

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[26] Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions: A Distinguished Provincial at Paris and other stories*, trans. Ellen Marriage (Philadelphia: Gebbie Publishing 1899), 99–103: "Easter Daisies," "The Marguerite," "The Camellia," "The Tulip"; originally published as *Illusions perdues*, in *La Comédie humaine*, vol. V (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 336–341: "La Pâquerette," "La Marguerite," "Le Camélia," "La Tulipe."

In the same way, the novel that Peter Morgan writes in *The Vice-Consul* by Marguerite Duras, is only quoted as it is being written, clearly marked in the text by such opening formulae as: "wrote Peter Morgan," or closing remarks such as "Peter Morgan has stopped writing."[27] Between the two, the novel, though freestanding, remains incomplete.

In *The Thibaults* by Roger Martin du Gard, *La Sorellina* by Jack Baulthy (a.k.a. Jacques Thibault) is for its part subordinated to the reading rhythm of Antoine Thibault who leafs furiously through the brochure hoping to find clues to the disappearance of his brother. The short story, set apart from the main plot by the use of italics, is thus cut up by interruptions from Antoine who, in his hurried reading, gets impatient with descriptive passages, and "jumped from one paragraph to another," or "skipped some pages, sampling a passage here and there."[28]

As for the nine stories begun in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* by Italo Calvino, unexpected events (duplicated signatures, printing errors, unfinished works, wrongly inserted texts, swapped out translations, etc.) continually interrupt our reading, making the book a succession of run-ups and false beginnings which we can make neither head nor tail of.[29]

Because the work I am searching for has to be complete, and few fictional works manage that, only a close reading of the book which contains them can justify, or not, their selection. What I call in a cavalier fashion "my books," not as their author, but as their publisher, I necessarily cannot have written because I have read them. The kind of writing in question here, which confers all its imposture on "the method," is in fact reading. It means precisely writing by reading, as we used to say of Matisse that he painted with scissors. Missing out the earlier stage of the pencil sketch, Matisse decided to cut directly into the color, at the same time creating its form. Here reading can be, depending on how advanced it is, an all-encompassing synchronous activity of sampling and writing. In order to carry this out, my "scissors" might, during the reading, stumble across an obstacle which, as soon as it crops up, however insignificant it seems, could definitively ruin the project of publication of the fictitious book. A single sentence missed by a character reading, or overlooked by the character writing, for the manifold reasons inherent in the main story, can be enough to lose the thread of a complete text, as the first book will always take precedence over the second book. For it to appear demands the stepping back of the first book, which then becomes a disposable peritext which the author may not mark as clearly as Giono does in *Noé*: "*Noah* ends here. *The Wedding* begins here..."[30] or as

[27] Marguerite Duras, *The Vice-Consul* (London: Hamilton, 1968), 1, 18; originally published as *Le Vice-Consul* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 1, 18.

[28] Roger Martin du Gard, *The Thibaults*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vicking Press, 1939), 641–643; originally published as *La Sorellina*, in *Les Thibault*, vol. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 41–43.

[29] Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012), comprising: *Outside the Town of Malbork* by Tadzio Bazakbal; *Leaning from the Steep Slope* by Ukko Ahti; *Without Fear of Wind or Vertigo* by Vorts Viljandi; *Looks Down in the Gathering Shadow* by Bertrand Vandervelde; *In a Network of Lines that Enlace* by Hermès Manara; *In a Network of Lines that Intersect* by Silas Flannery; *On the Carpet of Leaves Illuminated by the Moon* by Takakumi Ikoka; *Around an Empty Grave* by Calixto Bandera; and *What Story Down there Awaits its End?* by Anatoly Anatoline; originally published as *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Torino: Einaudi, 1979).

[30] Jean Giono, *Noé*, 862.

clearly as Cervantes in *Don Quixote* alerting his readers to the insertion of a short story external to the main book: “One of the faults they find with this history, [...] is that its author inserted in it a novel called ‘An Impertinent Curiosity’; not that it is bad or ill-told, but that it is out of place and has nothing to do with the history of his worship Señor Don Quixote.”[31] In this particular case, one can simply drop the before and after. In more complex examples, one has to tease out the peritext from the body of the fictional work like so many stage directions, and extract an autonomous text. In the ultimate recourse, one has to activate a fiction. For instance, Borges opposes “the visible works” of Pierre Menard, detailed in an exhaustive bibliography, which he supplies at the beginning of his short story, from his “subterranean” works composed of “the ninth and thirty-eighth chapters of Part One of *Don Quixote* and a fragment of the twenty-second chapter.”[32] And yet, even though these texts are “verbally identical,”[33] their meanings are different, the tour de force lying in being able to obtain precisely the same text in the context of contemporary writing. The *Quixote* of Menard cannot therefore be *read* without dissociating it from Cervantes, and without its reification in the story by Borges, at the heart of which it remains the captive of its own myth. The entire works of the latter are in fact marked out with equivalent fictions, from César Paladion to Lamkin Formento, passing by Federico Juan Carlos Loomis. The volumes that are attributed to them do not embody productions of the mind but certain procedures of the mind championed by Borges. The “amplification of units,” a writing technique whereby Paladion writes twelve books; the descriptivist critique which leads Formento to apply an analysis to *The Divine Comedy* which is identical to Dante’s original text, after the suppression of the peritext; and the pursuit of a quintessence of literature which brings Loomis to an exact correspondence of a work with its own title;[34] all these are so many strategies of creation which justify the concretization of those works. Their culmination is in the separate volume; better still, to loosen them from their original context is to give them the possibility, postponed until that point, of being *read*.

So, to the question of “How I didn’t write any of my books,” I can simply reply—using the words of Jacques Jouet—that I have leant over a little closer and gathered the books together, which is indeed what happened. Moreover, Lorem Ipsum is still the owner of a strange work of which I have not encountered any of the authors, whether they were, or were not, of flesh and bone. Furthermore, to whom do these books belong? To their authors? To their characters? To their publishers? Which is a role, in this particular case, that consists of picking them out, and giving them form, and which makes us wonder about publishing as an act of creation.

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[31] Miguel de Cervantes, *The Ingenious Nobleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Tobias Smollet (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2004), vol. 2, ch. III, 459; originally published as *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha* (Madrid: Ed. Castalia, 1983), vol. 2, chap. III.

[32] Jorge Luis Borges, “Pierre Menard,” 45–48; “Pierre Menard,” 444–446.

[33] Ibid., 52; Ibid., 449.

[34] Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, “Homage to Cesar Paladion,” “Naturalism revived,” “A List and Analysis of the Sundry Books of F. J. C. Loomis,” in *Chronicles*, 22, 41–48 and 49–56; originally published as “Homenaje a César Paladión,” “Naturalismo al día,” and “Catálogo y análisis de los diversos libros de Loomis,” in *Crónicas*, 15–20, 37–43, and 45–51.

Speaking of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, Michel Foucault wrote "Because to copy is *to do* nothing; it is *to be* the books being copied."[35] It is precisely between the execution (*doing*) and the incarnation (*being*) that the project of Lorem Ipsum acts, the poetic gesture of an act of publishing which breathes life as it appropriates, and whereby each borrowing can improve itself, in turn.

> "To read means to borrow; to create out of one's readings is paying off one's debts."[36]

Translated by Russell Richardson

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[35] Michel Foucault, "The Fantasia of the Library," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 109; originally published as "La Bibliothèque fantastique," in Gustave Flaubert, *La Tentation de saint Antoine* (Paris: LGF, 1971), 32.

[36] Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Letters and Aphorisms*, trans. H. C. Harfield and F. H. Mautner (London: Cape, 1969), 40; originally published as *Schriften und Briefe*, vol. I: *Sudelbücher* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1968), 46.

ORGANIC BOOK DESIGN FROM DWIGGINS TO DANIELEWSKI: THE METAMEDIAL AESTHETICS OF EMBODIED LITERATURE IN AMERICAN TRADE PUBLISHING

Alexander Starre

In 2011, Jennifer Egan's novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) won the Pulitzer Prize. The book made waves not least because it experiments with constantly shifting narrative perspectives and also features a chapter told entirely through PowerPoint slides. The majority of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* nevertheless consists of conventional text, set in uniform progression on each page. Yet, just as readers may concentrate on the visual dimension of the PowerPoint chapter, they may also feel inclined to look at the text instead of reading it and take note of its typography. The first hardcover edition, published by Alfred A. Knopf, actively invites readers to engage with typographic form on its final pages. Besides biographical data on Egan, these pages carry "A Note on the Type," an item rarely found in contemporary books:

> "The text of this book was set in Electra, a typeface designed by W. A. Dwiggins (1880–1956). This face cannot be classified as either modern or old style. It is not based on any historical model, nor does it echo any particular period or style. It avoids the extreme contrasts between thick and thin elements that mark most modern faces, and it attempts to give a feeling of fluidity and power."[1]

For the casual reader, the information given here might appear puzzling. To grasp the aesthetic and historical meaning of this note, one would need to know the differences between Old Style typefaces like Garamond and modern ones like Bodoni. Most importantly, however, this comment explicitly asserts that the text's typographic form is meant to trigger a specific aesthetic effect during the reading process.

The man mentioned in the above note—William Addison Dwiggins—had campaigned for the inclusion of such design commentary in mass-produced trade books:

> "The colophon, headed 'A Note on the Type in Which this Book is Set,' was a device adapted at Dwiggins's instigation from private press books as a means of calling the reading public's attention to a book's design and manufacturing background. Initially ridiculed by other trade publishers as an affectation, it has since been copied to varying degrees by many of them."[2]

Today, Knopf books still include these typographic notes in all first-edition hardcovers. My essay departs from the semi-hidden note in a contemporary text to inquire into the notion of publishing as an artistic practice in the field of mainstream literature. I will argue that graphic design forms a crucial area of literary communication, a missing link, perhaps, between classical conceptions of visual art and language-based theories of literature. In the realm of American graphic design, William Addison Dwiggins's role is of some historical importance. The first section of this essay surveys Dwiggins's work from the 1920s to the 40s, a period during which he used the literary trade book as a vehicle to transport a pragmatic design philosophy attuned to the commercial sphere of trade publishing. In the second part, I then return to contemporary American literature so as to show

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[1] Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (New York: Knopf, 2010), 278.

[2] Paul Shaw, "Tradition and Innovation: The Design Work of William Addison Dwiggins," *Design Issues* 1.2 (1984): 30.

how numerous writers, designers, and publishers now contribute to an evolving aesthetics that (re-)introduces the designed and embodied literary text into the increasingly digitized literary communication circuit. In a final step, I use Mark Z. Danielewski's novella *The Fifty Year Sword* (2005/2012) as a tutor text that presents a fictionalized version of the "organic book," thus recalling the central design ideal sketched by Dwiggins and his contemporaries. This collaborative product of a "bibliographic author" and a design-oriented publisher illustrates the ways in which writers take advantage of the digital workflow in contemporary publishing to expand their authorial control beyond the written text to the typography, the page layout, and the material shape of their works.

Dwiggins and the Ideal Trade Book

William Addison Dwiggins was born and raised in Cambridge, Ohio, which he left at the age of nineteen to study design with the eminent typographer Frederic Goudy in Chicago. At the turn of the twentieth century, several private presses sprang up in the U.S., emulating the bookmaking principles of the British Arts and Crafts movement. As Megan Benton has convincingly shown in her study *Beauty and the Book*, the transatlantic migration modified the radically autonomous ideologies of Arts and Crafts, with American presses less inclined to faux medievalism and not entirely adverse to the market.[3] Even more than other influential American book designers such as Bruce Rogers, Goudy and his disciple Dwiggins were thorough pragmatists of print. Neither praising, nor outright rejecting new printing technologies, they judged all available tools strictly based on their functionality. In his pioneering compendium *Typologia* (1940), Goudy wrote:

> "When the machine is used as a tool, as a means to an end, by a craftsman who wishes to secure the utmost control over every stage of his work and does not pass the fulfilling of technical requirements into the hands of mere artisans, the result may be comparable to that produced by hand, in spite of the limitations imposed by the machine."[4]

Goudy here counters the common assumption by craft purists that the technological revolution of mass printing eradicated any possibility of making beautiful books. While arguing for a conscious use of machinery, *Typologia* also contains an emphatic endorsement of the arts-and-crafts ideal of the beautiful book:

> "To be fine, instead of merely charming, the ideal book must include, too, a beauty of proportion, wherein the trained taste finds ever an appeal to delight; a beauty of form and rhythm in consonance, showing the hand of the artist in every detail; the well-proportioned leaf whereon the type has been handsomely placed, the lines well spaced, and the decorative elements of like origin with the types, cut with like tools and with similar strokes. The ideal book requires the use of the best materials

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[3] See Megan Benton, *Beauty and the Book: Fine Editions and Cultural Distinction in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

[4] Frederic W. Goudy, *Typologia: Studies in Type Design & Type Making, with Comments on the Invention of Typography, the First Types, Legibility, and Fine Printing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1940/1977), 159.

> in order that permanence may be assured, as such materials contribute to the esthetic quality of the whole by the feeling of pleasure they inspire apart from their use. In short, the book beautiful is a living and corporate entity in which each part is exquisite, conceived harmoniously, with true regard for the intrinsic requirements of the work seen as a whole."[5]

In calling the book a "living and corporate entity," Goudy expressly subscribes to poetological ideals of the organic nature of a work.[6] He thus strategically latches onto Romanticist aesthetics and its celebration of organic unity as expressed in the works of Goethe, Schlegel, Coleridge, and Emerson. Speaking from a somewhat regressive standpoint, Goudy claims that this organic model can not only be preserved, but enhanced through technology.

With similar design attitudes, Dwiggins left the small New England community of private presses in 1906 to launch a career in advertising, which earned him a comfortable living and growing professional esteem for the next two decades. However, well before the pinnacle of his career—the publication of the seminal *Layout in Advertising* in 1928—Dwiggins had privately announced his break with commercial work in favor of high art.[7] Instead of leaving one of these spheres completely, Dwiggins eventually ended up synthesizing both. This merger of arts-and-crafts workmanship and mass-produced advertising needed a new name, and Dwiggins had already supplied it in an article published in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in 1922. The text entitled "New Kind of Printing Calls for New Design" has frequently been cited as containing the first use of the term "graphic design." In it, Dwiggins distinguishes between three types of printing, "plain printing; printing as fine art; and a third large intermediate class of printing more or less modified by artistic taste."[8]

While graphic designers now populate the staff of diverse businesses, the American origins of this professional field—at least in the figure of William Addison Dwiggins—are tied to book publishing. Trade books were Dwiggins's medium of choice to convey his innovative ideas for designing beautiful objects. As mass-produced commodities, books demanded the pragmatic, economical design he knew from his work in advertising. At the same time, Dwiggins had learned to appreciate books as aesthetic objects in his early work with Goudy. The mass-market printing practices of the 1920s were a far cry from small-scale private press endeavors: the speed of the cylinder presses used in mass printing required thinner ink, which in turn led to pages that lacked contrast and looked gray; the new wood-pulp papers quickly turned brittle and yellow; cloth replaced leather for bindings, and pages were no longer sewed but encased. In all of this, the printer—not the publisher—remained responsible for most of the design.[9]

In the late 1920s, Dwiggins cast his lot with Alfred A. Knopf, who had founded his own publishing house in 1915, marketing his literary program through an emphasis on quality in design and bookmaking. Dwiggins worked for Knopf for the rest of his life, designing 280 books throughout the years.[10] His most distinguished achievements within this period were several prestige designs for limited editions. Design historians still pay tribute to his work on the 1931 edition of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, illustrated throughout with his unique stencil drawings. Yet Dwiggins's lasting, if largely undiscovered, significance for the arena of book design lies less in such bibliophile excursions than in the tenets of design that he established while producing more conventional books at Knopf. His introductory essay for an exhibition catalog of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) from 1927 contains his rationale in a nutshell:

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[5] Ibid., 161.

[6] Elsewhere in the book, Goudy expressly states that "beautiful printing is organic." Ibid., 165.

[7] See Shaw, "Tradition and Innovation," 28–29.

[8] William Addison Dwiggins, "New Kind of Printing Calls for New Design," *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 29, 1922, reprinted in Ellen Mazur Thomson, *The Origins of Graphic Design in America, 1870–1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 185.

[9] See Shaw, "Tradition and Innovation," 31.

> "[I]t would be interesting to try to meet the cost handicap in book manufacturing on the basis of *design*; i.e., to make books which were obviously cheap books—which did not masquerade as *editions de luxe* (in reduced circumstances). An art is not hampered by the material in which it works; stimulated thereby, rather. It is conceivable that very lively volumes could be made on a lower economic plane if only you were willing to forget about printing *at its best*, and to work out a product artistically in terms of its material."[11]

Renouncing any avant-gardist aspirations, Dwiggins did not aspire to producing auratic artists' books that experiment with the material features of the bound volume. Voicing a pragmatic ethos, he nevertheless argues that designers should consciously and creatively work with the limitations of the book medium. He insists that readers experience a book as an artistic whole, and thus urges fellow designers to turn every ingredient into an "organic part of the book."[12]

The numerous books that he produced at Knopf enact this philosophy. Dwiggins acted as cover designer, hand-lettering artist, and type-setter, thus reversing the neat subdivision of labor that dominated the large American publishing houses of the day.[13] He also sought direct contact with each part of the manufacturing apparatus for books, feeling his way into multiple production technologies. For the printed letters themselves, he had to look beyond the Knopf publishing house to the Mergenthaler Linotype company, which supplied the machines and licensed the typefaces used throughout North America in the twentieth century. Mergenthaler started commissioning typefaces designed by Dwiggins in the late 1920s. From a large number of designs, Electra and Caledonia emerged as the most successful and lasting typefaces.[14]

The typeface Electra debuted on the pages of Willa Cather's essay collection *Not Under Forty* in 1936. On the outside, the first edition hardcover is stamped with stenciled

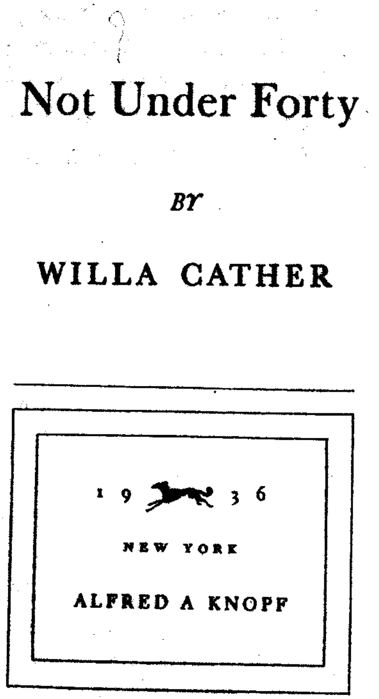
[10] See ibid., 30.

[11] William Addison Dwiggins, "The Structure of a Book," in *Mss. by WAD*, ed. Paul A. Bennett (New York: Typophiles, 1947), 60.

[12] Ibid., 66.

[13] In practice, this meant that Dwiggins had to coordinate the interests of the publishing house Knopf, of each respective author, and of the printing firm Plimpton that manufactured the books. Alfred A. Knopf recounts Dwiggins's mode of production and his collaboration with the various printing firms in "Dwig and the Borzoi," in *Postscripts on Dwiggins*, ed. Paul A. Bennett (New York: Typophiles, 1960), 31-70.

[14] In a table in his *Layout in Advertising*, Dwiggins listed several book faces and graded them on a scale of 0-10 according to legibility and quality of letter design. For his own fonts, he lists a 7 and a 9 (Electra) and a 9 and a 10 (Caledonia). William Addison Dwiggins, *Layout in Advertising* (New York: Harper, 1928), 22.



Not Under Forty

BY

WILLA CATHER

1 9 3 6

NEW YORK

ALFRED A KNOPF

Fig. 1. Willa Cather, *Not Under Forty* (New York: Knopf, 1936), title page.

illustrations. The typographic title page then allows generous amounts of space to the letter shapes, which are printed in classic contrasts of black and red [fig. 1]. The body text of the volume is also widely spaced with broad margins. In the back of the book, Dwiggins explains in a "designer's note" that the airy look of the pages intends to "give a kind of holographic, hand-written quality to the pages."[15] It is very hard to ascertain, however, how much of an impact, if any, these small notes had on the readership. Suspended in the tenuous middle ground between art and advertising, Dwiggins hardly left a trace on the history of literature or of visual art. Large numbers of American readers encountered Willa Cather's works on the pages of a Dwiggins book. But of course, it was Cather who entered the American literary canon and not Dwiggins.[16] Nevertheless, to understand the recent turn toward book design in contemporary American literature, we need to reengage with the graphic and material history of printed texts. In a peculiar twist, the digital revolution in book publishing has

[15] William Addison Dwiggins, "Designer's Note," in Willa Cather, *Not Under Forty* (New York: Knopf, 1936), 148.

[16] After Cather started publishing with Knopf, she took a very active interest in the design of her books. While her suggestions sometimes enervated her editors, Dwiggins appears to have enjoyed collaborating with her. In promoting Cather's work, Knopf used the careful design of her novels as a marketing strategy. The *New York Times* carried an advertisement for the novel *My Mortal Enemy* that showed neither the author nor the book's cover, but a facsimile reproduction of a regular page of text. See Amy Root Clements, *The Art of Prestige: The Formative Years at Knopf, 1915–1929* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 113.

led to a resurgence of the organic design ethos pioneered by Dwiggins. And once more, the firm Alfred A. Knopf figures as a crucial agent in this arena.

How to Produce Metamedia (and How to Read Them)

Our historical detour began on the pages of Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. The iconic jacket design of this book—showing a stylized guitar handle on an aquamarine background—was designed by Barbara de Wilde, a member of the Knopf design team. Aside from its visual finesse, the *Goon Squad* cover subtly employs paper finish and variable inks. De Wilde has a sizeable portfolio of cover designs for bestselling books, among them the jacket design for the short story collection *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*

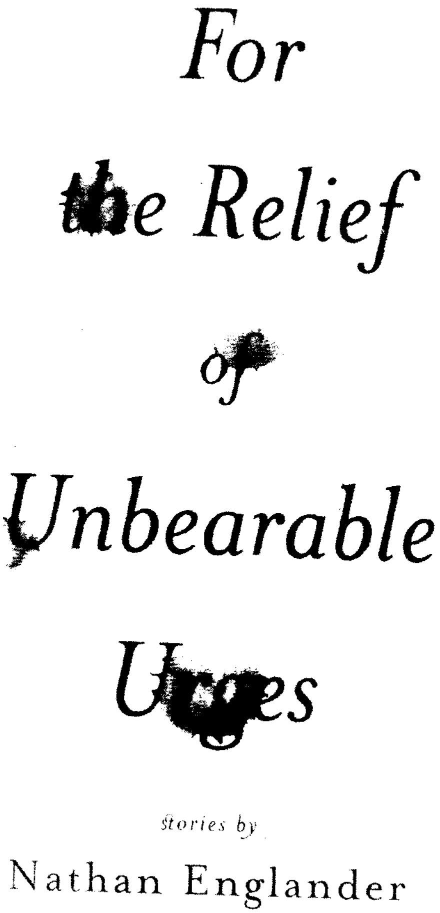


Fig. 2. Barbara de Wilde, book jacket design for Nathan Englander, *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges* (New York: Knopf, 1999). © Barbara de Wilde, 2015.

(1999) by Nathan Englander [fig. 2]. The purely typographic cover uses the font Mrs. Eaves—a reinterpretation of John Baskerville's famous eighteenth-century types—for the title and author's name, with some of the letters appearing stained by blotches of ink. De Wilde's layout weaves itself into the embodied medium of the book. Not merely creating its aesthetic effect *on* paper, it actively works *with* paper.[17] In visual form, De Wilde does what fiction does with words: she creates an aesthetic illusion. We are asked to imagine that someone—a prior reader? The author?—has shed tears on the cover of this book. A material book that contains a fictional text hereby turns itself into a fiction.

Aside from Barbara De Wilde, Chip Kidd is the most renowned member of the Knopf design staff. Kidd has designed countless covers for Knopf and Pantheon, but he has also followed Dwiggins's approach of applying organic design to entire books, as in the American edition of Haruki Murakami's novel *1Q84* (2011). What is more, Kidd has himself written two novels, *The Cheese Monkeys* (2001) and *The Learners* (2008), which follow a young design student through his college years and his early career at an advertising agency. Kidd's novels ask the reader to read text and book, design and artifact as integral parts of the narrative.[18] Granted, many critics continue to write off such design work as inconsequential gimmickry or superfluous decoration. This bias against the visual and tactile qualities of literature in most cases stems directly from the axiomatic understanding that the essence of literature is language—and nothing else.

Literary scholars need to reconsider such axioms every once in a while and test whether they still adequately represent how readers read, how writers write, and how the affordances of publishing affect the aesthetics of material texts. So what do we study when we study literature? As a complex phenomenon arising from networks of authors and readers, publishers and designers, humans and non-humans, literature in a most basic sense is communication. In his capacious theory of social systems, Niklas Luhmann has argued that art and literature are unique forms of social interchange since they self-referentially turn the form of communication into the subject of communication.[19] From a broadly systems-theoretical perspective, the evolution of communication media, while important for all forms of social exchange, figures critically in the domain of art. This holds especially true for the period since the advent of a completely digitized ecosystem for publishing in the late 1990s. Since then several authors, designers, and publishers have explored the ways in which a post-digital print culture could supplement literary production.

To grasp the communicative relevance inherent in the material forms of literary communication, I believe it is vital to uphold a critical distinction between technologies and media. In 1972, the communication scholar Harry Pross proposed a tripartite typology of media based on the role of technologies in the encoding and decoding process. In Pross's framework, "primary media" such as hand gestures or the human voice are internal to the human body and can be decoded through our sensorium without additional machinery. "Secondary media" are mechanically inscribed into a material substance that is intelligible to human eyes—think books, newspapers or photographs. "Tertiary media," finally, need technical equipment on both ends, such as recording machines and phonographs or film cameras and TV sets.[20] While scholars such as Bernard Stiegler and Katherine Hayles have recently proposed similar taxonomies, this basic materialist theory has found little resonance in media studies and even less in ongoing research on new media.[21] This is hardly surprising, of course, as a bias toward tertiary, electronic media is hardwired to modern communication studies and shows itself symptomatically in the ease with which we can talk about the book as technology or about transmedia storytelling. However, if we insist upon keeping production technologies and carrier media distinct, smooth convergences between media types appear more like neat allegory than actual fact. Secondary and tertiary media operate on different sensory levels. Such a materialist media concept may help to refocus the analysis of literary communication on the embodied reading processes on paper and on screens.

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[17] Dwiggins had singled out the conscious use of paper as a trait of good design: "This difference of mental attitude—the difference between thinking about paper merely as a background upon which one draws or paints or prints, and thinking about it as an active element of design—is radical and important. It is a touchstone by which you can determine whether or not you are properly a printing designer." Dwiggins, *Layout*, 5.

[18] On Kidd's novelistic work, see Alexander Starre, *Metamedia: American Book Fictions and Literary Print Culture after Digitization* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 172–182.

[19] See Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 22–26.

In my recent work, I have developed the concept of "metamedia" to account for instances in which literary texts bind themselves to a specific medial format.[22] Materiality does not automatically possess a distinctive contribution to the effect of a particular work. Narrative texts need to activate their material dimension *within* narrative to foster metamedial reflexivity. Much as a metafictional novel shows itself to be aware of its status as fiction, a metamedial one is sensitive to its medial embedding. Metamedial effects can be triggered in a number of ways. While unconventional book forms and extensive paratextual commentaries are the most direct techniques, numerous diegetic components can also expose the materiality of the book, often pairing rhetorical elements with page design. Jonathan Safran Foer and Mark Z. Danielewski have explored such techniques across their respective oeuvres. Works such as Danielewski's *House of Leaves* (2000) and Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) are book fictions in a material sense: they extend the aesthetic illusion outward across the entire bound codex and ask readers to suspend their disbelief about the ontological status of the book. In *House of Leaves*, the creation of the text is credited to the fictional editor Johnny Truant and the physical design of the pages supposedly replicates the typescripts of the elusive scholar Zampanò.

Many accounts of aesthetic production in the digital age present a flat, supposedly democratic system of exchange, which sees weak authors at the behest of strong readers whose commenting, remixing, and rewriting activities form the basis of an emerging convergence culture.[23] The story of convergence emanating from recent American book fictions, however, reads differently. Instead of simultaneous production and reception in the digital cloud, writers in the vein of Foer and Danielewski harness the potential of technological convergence in writing and design. We see here an ascendant form of strong authorship that can claim each part and parcel of a literary production as being under complete authorial control. Instead of a mere writer, this variant of the author is also a bibliographer in the literal sense. The bibliographic author writes not only *in* books but *with* books.

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[20] See Harry Pross, *Medienforschung: Film, Funk, Presse, Fernsehen* (Darmstadt: Habel, 1972), esp. 128–262.

[21] See N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Bernard Stiegler, "Memory," in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, ed. W. J. T Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 66–87.

[22] See Starre, *Metamedia*, esp. 28–66.

Mark Danielewski composes his books completely in Adobe InDesign, cutting out any design intermediaries at his publisher Pantheon, an imprint of Knopf. Through this practice of bibliographic authorship, he can invite readers to decode his novels on all levels of signification, from the verbal to the typographic and material. In his official online forum, there is ample proof that readers follow this trail and participate in wide-ranging hermeneutic discussions on typography, page layout and even minuscule changes between different editions. From the vantage point of such book fictions, the descriptions and self-descriptions of digital culture appear increasingly inadequate. While digital technologies do sustain flexible, mutable, and transmedial forms of communication, they have also encouraged the creation of hyper-stable print objects that through their very immutability and embodied design in turn spark numerous derivative productions across the Internet.

Once the object changes, methods have to adapt. To tackle such book fictions analytically, literary studies has to take the material dimensions of text seriously. For one, this means that the practices of close reading—still the most distinct method of literary studies as a discipline—should be extended to aspects like typefaces, book formats, and the embodied interactions with carrier media. Among theorists such as Friedrich Kittler and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, engagement with materiality almost automatically spells doom for hermeneutics.[24] Yet as the work of Jerome McGann, Katherine Hayles, Jessica Pressman and others shows, a materialist hermeneutics of the printed book is not only possible but pays rich dividends.[25] Medial close reading is not to be understood as a throw-back to the intrinsic method of sealing off the literary text from the influx of cultural contexts. In fact, the outward form of texts, in any medial carrier, creates a rich interface to the social context a given work arises out of and inscribes itself back into.

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[23] The foundational work in this field is Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[24] See Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[25] See Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); N. Katherine Hayles, *Writing Machines* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman, eds., *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Organic Books 2.0—Staging Literary Texts as Book Art

As we have seen, the publishing house Alfred A. Knopf has through its century-long institutional history established a firm reputation of fusing literariness with a strong design ethos. In recent years, Knopf has expanded this design focus toward new forms of embodied literature by publishing the work of Mark Z. Danielewski under its imprint Pantheon. Both his cult book *House of Leaves* and the follow-up novel *Only Revolutions*—a mathematically calculated book sculpture—adapt Dwiggins's print pragmatism in their embrace of digital design tools. In this process, these works extend the sphere of literary signification deep into territory of book production and design, converting Dwiggins's "organic book" into "organic narrative." Danielewski's first two novels metamedially entwine text and book form to represent and perform spatial fictions. *House of Leaves* asks readers to decode the printed codex as a material metaphor for the eponymous house, while *Only Revolutions* contains a free-wheeling cyclical prose-poem that is reinforced through various numerical and visual design features.[26] In his book *The Fifty Year Sword* (2005/2012), Danielewski most directly merges book, text, and diegesis by using the trope of sewing as the central narrative and structural conceit.[27] The protagonist of this novella, a seamstress named Chintana, visits a bizarre Halloween party also attended by Belinda Kite, who had an affair with Chintana's husband that lead to the couple's divorce. In the course of the party, a mysterious storyteller arrives to entertain the young guests, five orphaned children whose voices supposedly make up the fractured narrative.

Centering *The Fifty Year Sword* on the idea of "text-as-texture," Danielewski continues his preoccupation with post-structuralist theory as introduced in his debut novel. Throughout *Dissemination*, Jacques Derrida had used the metaphorical configuration of fabric and weaving to illustrate his theory of textuality. For Derrida, the texture metaphor illustrates the precarious status of hermeneutic acts:

> "The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web: a web that envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. There is always a surprise in store for the anatomy or physiology of any criticism that might think it had mastered the game, surveyed all the threads at once, deluding itself, too, in wanting to look at the text without touching it, without laying a hand on the 'object,' without risking—which is the only chance of entering into the game, by getting a few fingers caught—the addition of some new thread."[28]

As we see here, Derrida's account of reading fuses notions of organic embodiment with a semantics of stitching, sewing, and tearing apart. On the semantic level, *The Fifty Year Sword* repeatedly employs terms like "stich," "thread," "embroidery,"

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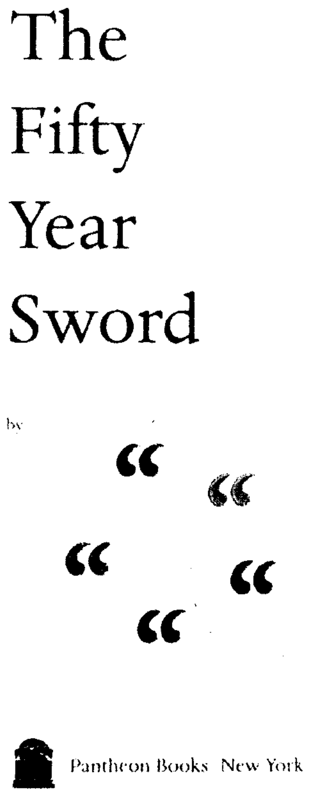
[26] A useful critical survey of Danielewski's work is Joe Bray and Alison Gibbons, eds., *Mark Z. Danielewski* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). On *House of Leaves* and *Only Revolutions* as book fictions also see Starre, *Metamedia*, 128–166.

[27] *The Fifty Year Sword* appeared in a limited edition with a very small print run in 2005 with the Dutch publisher De Bezige Bij. The redesigned 2012 U.S. edition used for this essay has been more widely circulated and has received significantly more attention in the press.

[28] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (London: Continuum, 2004), 69.



The
Fifty
Year
Sword

by

“ “
“ “
“

Pantheon Books New York

Fig. 3. Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Fifty Year Sword* (New York: Pantheon, 2012), title page.

as well as various synonyms and other similar phrases. In addition to this, Mark Danielewski's authorial persona claims all visual and material features of the printed codex to be part of the literary work.

As in similar metamedial book fictions, this visual-material expansion happens most directly through paratextual communication. On the title page of the book, Danielewski appears not as the author, but as an editor or curator. Disclaiming authorship through the device of the fictional editor, Danielewski asserts that *The Fifty Year Sword* is the creation of five voices represented by colored citation marks.[29] These are visually rendered on the title page in the form of embroideries [fig. 3]. What is more, the backsides of these embroideries appear perfectly matched on the verso side of this page, fostering the illusion that someone has stitched these marks right through the paper sheet. The

[29] In a short foreword, that is typeset so as to resemble the blade and handle of a sword, Danielewski's authorial voice claims to have merely "lend together these gathered and rerelated bits" of the story. Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Fifty Year Sword* (New York: Pantheon, 2012), 10.

copyright page contains detailed information on the typefaces used in the book, as well as on the Pantone colors that represent the various characters. Whereas other Knopf and Pantheon books use typographical colophons for pedagogical purposes, Danielewski's paratextual explanations serve to authorize design as part of the fiction. Through these devices, *The Fifty Year Sword* stages itself as a metamedial book fiction, fixed in a specific typographical and material form, all of whose components contribute shades of meaning to be decoded by the readers. As we can see from numerous postings in the official forums on the Internet, many readers follow this lead and provide elaborate hermeneutic discussions about the fictional relevance of Danielewski's typography and book design.

In the main part of the book, the written narrative appears solely on the verso sides of the pages, while the recto sides are either completely blank or decorated with various embroideries. Whereas Danielewski has often claimed to design all parts of his books by himself, he did collaborate with several other artists on *The Fifty Year Sword*. Most importantly, he employed three textile artists who created illustrations for various scenes in the story. On many of the book's pages, the reader can see that these artists used colored threads to stitch embroideries through paper or cardboard. Reprinted as high-resolution, full-color scans on the pages of the Pantheon book, these images create a material trompe l'oeil effect that accentuates the papery surface of the book. Unlike conventional illustrations, they do not float in a textual vacuum but instead anchor themselves to the physical page.

The organic unity of text, book, and fictional world informs several moments of the narrative. The plot reaches its climax when Belinda Kite tries to debunk the storyteller's tale of the eponymous fifty-year sword—a handle without a blade, whose lacerations only take effect when their victim turns fifty. Belinda stabs herself repeatedly with the imaginary blade only to collapse at midnight, as she is about to give a toast to her own fiftieth birthday. The woman's body violently disintegrates in front of the crowd, with fingers and hands splattering into the snow on the ground in a "spray of blood" (276). The ensuing pages illustrate the carnage with large tableaus of white and red thread. Where Derrida only likened textuality to fabric, Danielewski's novella extends the reach of this metaphor to depict human bodies as frail webs of string.

The outer layer of the book further intensifies the material signification of sewing. For the dust jacket, Knopf's associate art director Peter Mendelsund employed a stark orange background and a simple typographic design using Dante, the trademark font used by Danielewski for printed renditions of his name. In addition to its visual dimension, the jacket bears the marks of needles, having been pin-pricked in several dozen spots through a mechanical process at the printing shop. The final component of the embodied design of this book draws attention to the sewing process that is still part of the manufacture of many hardcover books. Commonly, books that are sown through the fold of their individual signatures use white or creamcolored thread that readers will hardly notice as they leaf through the book. The textblock of *The Fifty Year Sword* is sown together using thick, bright-red thread that shines forth from the gutter of the book in sixteen-page intervals.[30]

In a conversation published online, Mendelsund and Danielewski explain how the financial constrictions of a mass-market publisher and the technical limitations of book manufacturing often forced them to adapt their creative ideas. Both of them nevertheless claim that these limitations are not antagonistic to the free expression and the aesthetic ideals of literary writing. With recourse to the supposed flexibility of electronic texts, Danielewski holds:

> "The way many tablets automatically alter fonts, for example, or authorize the reader to select from a limited list, disregards a tradition, centuries old, of designing and carefully selecting a type design. And it's a tradition not born out of constriction and control, I think, but expression and the aesthetics of sense and beauty. We both know how much time goes into designing a book. Personally, I go through hundreds of fonts before choosing one. And that's just the start: margin size matters (put that on a T-shirt!). Folios. Colors, of course. Not to mention how the book as an object sits in the reader's hand."[31]

Danielewski, Foer, and Kidd, along with many others represent an emergent type of literary artist, who transgresses the border between writing and designing. While these authors use visual and typographic enhancements that have in the past been associated with avant-gardist or experimental literature, they manage to appeal to a mass audience through collaborations with major trade presses. To make sense of their work, we need to overcome the simplistic idea that print and digital are always already antagonists or competitors. All of these artists can only produce such extraordinary printed artifacts because of their command of digital design tools. In our explorations of contemporary literature, we should be cautious of the teleological narrative that proclaims a full-scale shift from print to digital. In a trade publishing system that increasingly accommodates artistic manipulations of the printed codex, books no longer figure as neutral carriers of text, but instead turn into narrative media that have their own story to tell.

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[30] Pantheon also published a limited deluxe edition of *The Fifty Year Sword* that featured a special form of binding without a spine, leaving the decorative sewing on the back of the text block openly visible. This edition came in a box with metal latches, resembling the box in which the fictional storyteller carries the mysterious sword.

[31] "Q&A: Mark Z. Danielewski," *Powell's Books*, October 9, 2012, accessed November 16, 2015, www.powells.com/blog/qa/qa-mark-z-danielewski-by-mark-z-danielewski.

The Mediatization of Contemporary Writing[1]

Nick Thurston

Trying to figure out what marks contemporary literature as contemporary is a deceptively complicated job because the concept of contemporaneity at stake is itself complicated. Those complications are sustained by the unqualified way that the word *contemporary* seems to refer to both a quality of being with (*con*) in time (*temp*), in the colloquial sense of something being "of its time," and to *simultaneously* identify our current moment as a historical period, a period that we're historicizing as we live it because one of the qualities that distinguishes it from previous periods is an obsession with now-ness.[2] Within discussions of the arts, this doubling has been theorized at greatest length by those studying visual culture (usually vis-à-vis contemporary art, which John Douglas Millar has rightly pointed to as contemporary culture's placeholder—its unelected parent category), not least because premonitions about post- and post-post-modern life put forward during the late-twentieth century were most popularly obsessed with the growing presence and influence of images.[3] All such forethoughts focused critical approaches to twenty-first century culture in terms of the visual: what can be seen (the visible) and ways of seeing it (visibility and our visualizations).

On the surface of contemporary life, the compression of multi-megapixel cameras into networked smartphones that feed data-streams like Instagram via one-click apps suggest those premonitions were well founded. What excites me and some other poets who have been at the forefront of the Conceptual writing scene is a simple observation that problematizes such premonitions and the visual bias they ground. In short, although the surface of life is constantly being flooded with images, its depths, structures, flows, and our interactions with them have proved to be more dependent than ever on written language, not least because all computational data is a kind of emic, alphanumeric code. The really new features of twenty-first century life are reforming life under the surface—in relational networks that we only have limp metaphors to describe, like "the cloud"—and so we need to read everything and anything legible below the surface in ways that go beyond seeing. As writers we seem to ask: what might it be interesting to write if we were to wager that, rather than being *over-written* by the visual, the contemporary world has become more fundamentally *textualized* than any period before it?[4] And as readers we seem to ask: what kinds of literacies might we need to read these new textualities forming on and below the surface?

I don't want to stray from an observation to a clumsy truth-claim, I don't want to rehearse arguments about the textualization of everything, and nor do I want to resuscitate out-of-date ideas about the difference between "visual" art and literature. But I do want to take the above speculation seriously and to think about the importance of technical mediation to the changed horizons of new writing—to the new nowish-ness of contemporary writing and the unprecedented

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[1] Extended from a feature essay of the same title commissioned by the *White Review*, London, published September 2014.

[2] As different from, for example, the futurology of modernism: new, new, new ...

[3] As John Douglas Millar told me, winter 2013.

[4] Robert Fitterman re-defined the practice of Conceptual writing as a wager on the unexpected textualization of twenty-first century culture during a "Literature and the Law" seminar that I convened for the University of Leeds, March 2014. See also Fitterman's *Just Another Soft Machine* (London: Veer Books, 2014).

(im)mediacy of public language acts. One of the strengths of the best Conceptual writing is that it steps outside of the should-be territory defined by previous poetries and the nineteenth-century's epistemology of literature to concern itself with, and even begin amongst, what Gerald Bruns would call "literature's elsewheres" and I have started to call the (im)properly extra-literary.[5]

One aspect of contemporary life is that there are more people than ever producing and consuming public language, and more private language becoming public than ever before: there's more language, and a higher proportion of it ends up being public. This is happening in obvious ways, which have become common news issues over the last ten-to-fifteen years, but also in less obvious ways, as the NSA surveillance scandal has paradoxically obviated. Digital software-hardware combinations have standardized desktop publishing, seemingly naturalized the database as an organizing principle for life, and now aggregate flows of data in constant streams around the world in volumes way beyond the limits of what we can actually read. Every time we type on a computational device our keystrokes are being published by default, to some degree of discretion, every few seconds. They're saved automatically into the file we're making, onto the archive drive of our devices, onto the linked backup servers our workplaces have installed, and evidently onto the monitored databases of international surveillance groups. That's an edition of four before you've even finished a sentence; and at least philologically speaking, it seems to me important to remember that the word "publish" derives from the Latin *publicare* (to make public) via the middle English *publicen* (to get rid of, to let go of). What this kind of *im*mediate and *in*visible reproduction demonstrates is that often, now, writing and publishing are the same action—that self-publishing is something we do to ourselves by default, even if only by allowing our writing technologies to do it for us.[6]

By the broadest theories of media, one can argue that languages themselves should be understood as a technology. By the corresponding sociologies, members of each society co-develop a version of this technology to mediate their expressions and relationships with both one another and their self-understanding. By more narrow theories of media, one can argue that the technologies of language are only the apparatuses made to carry a language, rather than any language itself. Any sociology that involves such an idea has, at some point, to distinguish the carrier (medium) from the carried (language), and to do so in terms of *technics*: the former has to be a technical construction, something made by people, and the latter has to be something else.[7] Figuring out what kind of "something else" language might be has in the past depended on distinguishing between some independent presence of language (as if language were a thing-in-itself regardless of people) and the technicity of its being represented (language as a thing-in-itself that people *produce* representations of). These are natural language theses, as when people maintain that language is natural because, for example, the word is God's and so we can only speak imperfect second-order representations of His true word.

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[5] Gerald Bruns developed the idea of literature's "elsewhere" (or "otherness") from the work of Maurice Blanchot and Hugh Kenner. See, for example, Bruns's *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[6] For a fuller discussion of self-publishing and Conceptual writing see my article "Conceptualist Reading Performances as a Praxis of Publishing," *Journal for Writing in Creative Practice* 6, no. 3 (2013-14): 421–429.

[7] Understanding "technical" objects as products of human innovation, and as thus distinguished from "natural" objects, is an extension of the philosophical difference between technical (*techne*) and empirical (*episteme*) qualities. See, for example, Bernard Stiegler's *Technics and Time* book series (1994, 1996, 2001, to date), which have been published in English translation by Stanford University Press (Redwood) in 1998, 2008, and 2010.

Without some such faith that language has a natural state, status and presence, it's difficult to think of writing as anything other than a representation of a non-presence, or rather, a present representation, as many high modernists believed. The idea that any language is anything other than the collective history and practice of that language being enacted—its materializations—plus the temporality of those representations as material—material that only has a "being" insofar as it gets engaged with—dissolves, like a faith unraveled, with the demystification of the idea that our languages could've ever been anything other than made and re-made by societies. Written language *isn't* "something else," something other than what we make it, something with an innate constitution. Language acts are representations of a schema of representations, they're representations of representations, and all representations try to re-present something that they're not. Language is the thing in between, in the middle, the medium; but it's also always socially constructed and the mediator of anything made public in or with it (i.e., *within* it). The 140-character limit on Twitter doesn't only constrain Tweets; it has echoing effects on attention spans, contractions of spelling and punctuation, and the skills expected of marketers. It's not that words no longer represent concepts, as the bandying of Marshall McLuhan's famous "the medium is the message" can mislead people to think, but that we have to recognize the increasing significative power of all the re-mediating processes and institutions that intersect to make any language act public.[8] In short, we have to find new ways of *reading* publishing.

Every language act re-mediates the mediality (the in-between-ness) of its language in a specific way, and every act enters into sequences of language networks, networks that in turn re-mediate the remediation etc., etc. As the networks become more accelerated, pervasive, *and invisible* so too do the acts. It should come as no surprise that some of the poets who inherited the consequences of the above debates are interested in exploring how the newly accelerated *im*mediacy of language is, perversely, an expression of the mediatization of contemporary writing in the contemporary world generally.

I'm calling this change perverse because it flips the modification performed by the prefix *im-*, and so formulates a productive paradox: Now the *im-* in *immediacy* can be read as signifying a "movement toward" the quality of being mediate, rather than signifying a "lack of mediality" or a being "not mediated."[9] That second, negative sense of the prefix *im-* has until now modified the meaning of *immediacy* to

[8] Marshall McLuhan first proposed the phrase "the medium is the message" in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

[9] All citations are from "Oxford English Dictionary," Oxford University Press, accessed July 6, 2014, http://www.oed.com.

signify an experience of direct contact between an *I* and another *thing-in-itself*, a contact that is direct because there's nothing in between them. I'm not claiming that this definition is now somehow wrong—that now, when people have sex, it's necessarily less immediate than it was, say, one hundred years ago—only that this definition is too simple if we're going to try to analyze our experiences of writing and reading in our mediatized age. If language-in-itself is a constructed representation then any immediate contact with language must be directly with a representation *plus* the schema(s) it's situated in. Representations can't be themselves without a context because the (albeit real) present-ness of a representation is insufficient-in-itself by definition. Contemporary public language has productively extended this insufficiency by converting it into a hyper-situated-ness, linking links to links—always elsewhere, always more, always multi-directional.

But what about the status of the *I* that comes to that immediate instance of direct contact with language-in-itself, language as a multiply-situated, impermanent, and insufficient representation? The term *mediatization* turns the stem noun *mediate* into a verb, which is a form (turning nouns into verbs) that seems to irritate a lot of people. In this compound the suffix *-ization* literally means "to make x," and it gets us a little closer to articulating the tidal movement (below the surface, out of sight) of our contemporary medial condition.[10] The specific constellation of significant media at our "now" moment in history structures something more than a media-scape for culture—something more effective than a passive backdrop—something more like a mediated-and-mediating-scape. Under the surface of the language we read, the tidal movement of these interacting media seems to mediate everything that has contact with it, to unlimited, accelerating, and ever-more pervasive extents.

Short of ethical objections, there's no reason to think that in this adolescent era of digitally-inflected post-humanism the human authorial subject *should* be invulnerable to this tide. In short, we can't just *use* these networks and networked technologies and maintain whatever integrity we come to them with; when we engage them "they" (a clumsy shorthand, I know) begin a process of mediating us with soft and hard power. Some of those operations and their affects are visible, others not: Every time the predicative typing software on our mobile phones overwrite the letter order we actually key, or our web browsers syphon data about our search behavior so as to customize the adverts we're shown, the medial network is mediating our use of the medium and us too in turn. These interacting media are doing so behind the veil of an interface, behind the lumpen presence of hardware, and behind our seeming ownership of both, according to chains of algorithms that are so long and so many and so changeable that we can't possibly *see* how they're re-mediating us. When I make a Google account to embed their Analytics HTML in a website I manage, and start to worry about the stats it returns, I'm performing my own interpellation—I'm pretending to be the policeman and hailing myself.[11]

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[10] Ibid.

These are crude examples of what I'm calling the mediatization of writing, and of the fact that our medial condition will depend more and more on textualization as the virtual and actual increasingly combine to mediate whatever it is that our contemporary reality is becoming, at least at the level of code-algorithm and software-hardware interactions. Lots of smarter people than me have pushed our knowledge of these emergent conditions further and more intelligently than my sketch above.[12] In tandem with their technical and philosophical advances, some poets have been willing to hyper-extend these re-mediations and hyper-extend the cultural register of poetry by again re-mediating such formations of language—this was the modus of Conceptual writing—nominating such formations to a context where people are willing and able to read differently. The best of such work has allowed us to experience otherwise unimaginable aspects of the fact that public language has never been so unstable.

The forms of languages, their ranges, their userships, and the demographic variety within each language's usership, all only add to the historical baggage that inevitably builds up as a language gets older. When lexicographers add webspeak terms to the *Oxford English Dictionary* news broadcasters react with chatter about how language is changing. But to do so by looking at the lexicon is to miss the more dramatically new change, which is fundamentally one of materiality—it's a change in what language *is* (as a multiply-situated, impermanent, and insufficient re-re-re- ... representation) not necessarily what it's used to say. Contemporary public language is clonable and fluid, overlaid and reproducible on-demand; it's polymorphic and regulated by vectors, relayed from spinning magnetic discs elsewhere and as unstable as the media that has mediatized our ways and means of writing *within* it. Now it's easy to feel like the language act is more immediate and dynamic than the supposed authorial subject behind that act. Now, more than ever, public language seems less and less like an expression of some already-public subject and more and more like that subject's post-human proxy, my all-too-real avatar. Administering a popular Twitter account, for example, can make that authorial subject's other contributions to public life seem inadequate. Mediatization leads to our artificial subjectivity becoming more real (or more really dynamic) than any other aspect of our self-subject-hood. It's as if via our artificial artificial subjectivity we can become more immediate and immediately engaged with the contemporary "real" world than any pre-, un-, or less-medial subject-position could possibly allow.[13]

How and what do our avatar societies *output* as writing? What forms of literature are being written at the extremes of our contemporary real that weren't previously possible? Automated writing services that compose new texts using a

[11] This characterization refers to Louis Althusser's "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970), which contains his famous example of how individuals take part in their own subjectification if they self-identify as the addressee when a policeman shouts "Hey, you there!"

[12] See, for example, McKenzie Wark's *A Hacker Manifesto*, written over a decade ago using message boards as a feedback loop for revisions, published by Harvard University Press (Cambridge, MA) in 2004 and still eerily prescient.

[13] The hyper-extension of our lives via "the Network" and "the cloud" hyper-extend the artificial subjectivity we create through writing rather than negate it. Our artificial subjectivities are now too real to be simply artificial. This artificiality is not negated; it's doubled-back and doubled-up.

method called narrative analytics are a kind of limit-less limit case. For example, the Long Tail algorithm has been used to write over 890,000 new books, which have been published by Icon Group International since 1999. So-called narrative analytics programs not only analyze a dataset for you but also narrate that analysis and produce new findings.[14] Until now the latter at least—the production of new insights—which is to say, scientistically, the production of new knowledge—had been assumed to be the preserve of human authorial subjects. I can't imagine a properly contemporary poetry, in the complicated double sense of contemporaneity that we're now working with, that doesn't explore the modes of writing or questions raised by these kinds of technical and non-literary developments. They cast a technical foreshadow in front of (*before*) all new writing.

Poets who problematize the shade of this foreshadow, like those of us amongst the Conceptual writing scene, do so by taking the risk of producing improperly extra-literary acts that often can't or aren't *seen* to be poetic. These communities of writers and readers bring into question commonly held assumptions about what literary output is by misusing their social status as cultural producers (authors) to turn attention to the growing gap between the form of literary products (publications) and the form of literary production (publishing). For example, if being a Conceptual writer means, in a certain sense, being a performative reader in hyper-relational networks, then the actual authorial work for any such writer is to choreograph performances of (re-)publishing. By showing that any publication is an *imago* or illusory mirror image of a specific act of publishing, via which the real act or actual labor of writing and making language public come to consciousness, such work makes it possible to think of publishing itself as *the* meta-condition of public language acts, to think of choreographing the event of publishing as a creative act, and to therefore re-conceptualize reproduction as a form of production.[15]

It's complicated to establish quite what writing and literary output are in a situation where the industrial logic of manufacturing, which was honed during the Second Industrial Revolution, is turned on its head. Mainstream literary presses still depend upon a manufacturing flow of *production-then-reproduction*, buying or commissioning the writing of transferable manuscripts that get edited and then replicated in units. As we stumble into the age of the Third Industrial Revolution, where computer-driven logics of *mass customization* are fundamentally changing massification, outputs are being modified in and through the process of reproduction.[16] For £120 the sportswear giant Nike will let me design my own trainer from a database of options on their website, displaying instant renders of my shoe, with its Volt-white heel loop, Wolf Grey swoosh, Medium Berry lining, Total Orange laces, Deep Royal Blue tongue loop, white speckled outsole and any twelve characters of text I want embroidered across the heels. These shoes are an output, a product, a materialization, of a newly inverted manufacturing logic, a logic of *reproduction-as-production*.

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[14] The Icon Group International is an imprint begun by Philip M. Parker whose research work led to the development of the Long Tail program. Parker alone is the listed author of well over 100,000+ automated books already, available in e- and print on demand versions. All statistics are from spring 2014.

[15] This model of misidentification was borrowed by Jean Baudrillard for his 1973 critique of Marxist productivism, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (London: Telos Books, 1975), from Jacques Lacan's 1949 paper, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London & New York: W. W. Norton, 1977).

[16] Against Jeremy Rifkin's Internet utopianism in *The Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power is Transforming Energy, the Economy, and the World* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), I find the questions raised by current changes in manufacturing to have been well introduced by the *Economist's* editorial, "The Third Industrial Revolution," published April 21, 2012, and brilliantly demonstrated by the London Design Museum's 2013 exhibition, "The Future is Here."

My Nike Roshe Run Flyknit iD shoes would be assembled in a sweatshop where computers drive the factory and human employees fill in the gaps. But how would a literature based on reproduction-as-production work and what work would writers do to produce it? Speculative answers are being shared, around the world, all of the time, in extra-literary forms that hyper-extend the new status anxieties of poetic voice (maybe best articulated as "status_anxieties") and the seemingly infinite ambience of its formations.[17] During summer 2013, my most recent collection of poems was published in a formally conventional book entitled *Of the Subcontract. Or, Principles of Poetic Right*. All one hundred poems had been written for me by low-paid workers on the Mechnical Turk labor pooling service run by Amazon.com. I arranged the content they sold to me according to cost-of-production, from 1-cent to 1-dollar, rather than by thematic affinity. I typeset a standard layout, prescribed four sections based on my financial investment, and paid freelancers to generate the texture of *my* text.[18] People like me who share these new textual objects may or may not have engaged in conventional acts of writing-as-composition but are non-the-less exercising some kind of cultural authorship. And the new intensity with which we have been doing so seems to modify the question of authoriality that is central to the epistemology of literature. Now, instead of asking "who wrote that text?" it seems more apposite to ask "who is taking responsibility for that text?" *in the present tense*, and to expect answers that are as liquid, multiplied, and impermanent as contemporary life.

Re-theorizing this theoretical question is a reaction to the change in how we work as writers—it is a symptom of the fact that certain forms of authorship are, now, primarily an act of taking responsibility for particular cultural object(s) in contextually-specific circumstances. The improperness of this reduction is only proper to our circumstances. Communities who make these new forms of language public—new publishing communities—seem better able to approach the fact that there's never been so much public language and yet public language has never been so insufficient, and seem better able than most to turn that fact into a conceptually productive (and shared) problematic. The (im)mediacy of much such work manages to quickly capture, then just as quickly lose, the interest many poetry readers by inverting the status of reproduction and production and letting the categories of poem, poet, and poetry be spun in the process. Given that the prefix *im-* is a variant spelling of *in-*, we might better bend English grammar to describe these (im)mediate public language acts as *in*mediate. I suggest so not least because the artificial artificial subjectivities that we re-re-re ... produce through inmediate public language acts seem to make the mediatization of writing starkly legible where it might otherwise remain invisible and culturally unread.

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[17] For a longer speculation on how the problems of contemporary poetic voice seem to be characterized by certain status_anxieties see my article "Status_Anxieties," *Convolutions: The Journal of Conceptual Criticism* 1, no. 3 (2014), available on the Electronic Poetry Center's online archive: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/thurston.

[18] For a broader discussion of *Of the Subcontract*, see Stephen Voyce's long interview with me in the *Iowa Review* 43, no. 3 (2014), also available online: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/thurston, or Rita Raley's "Outsourced Poetics," *American Book Review* 35, no. 2 (2014): 5–6.

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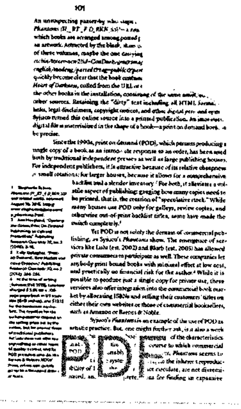

Experimental Writing in its Moment of Digital Technization: Post-Digital Literature and Print-on-Demand Publishing

Hannes Bajohr

An unsuspecting passer-by who steps into Stephanie Syjuco's installation *Phantoms (H__RT _F D_RKN_SS)*[1]—a couple of stools in front of a table on which books are arranged among potted plants—might be unaware that it is an artwork. Attracted by the black, shiny covers, the visitor could pick up one of these volumes, maybe the one carrying the title *http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=ConDark.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all.* Leafing through, the reader would quickly realize that the book contains the text of Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*, culled from the URL of the university website on the title; the other books in the installation, consisting of the same novel, come from other sources. Retaining the "dirty" text including all HTML formatting, links, legal disclaimers, copyright notices, and other digital peri- and epitext, Syjuco turned this online source into a printed publication. An immaterial digital file is materialized in the shape of a book—a print on demand book, to be precise.

Since the 1990s, print on demand (POD), which permits producing a single copy of a book as an immediate response to an order, has been used both by traditional independent presses as well as large publishing houses. For independent publishers, it is attractive because of its relative cheapness in small rotations; for larger houses, because it allows for a comprehensive backlist and a slender inventory.[2] For both, it alleviates a volatile aspect of publishing: gauging how many copies need to be printed, that is, the creation of "speculative stock." While many houses use POD only for galleys, review copies, and otherwise out-of-print backlist titles, some have made the switch completely.[3]

Yet POD is not solely the domain of commercial publishing, as Syjuco's *Phantoms* show. The emergence of services like Lulu (est. 2002) and Blurb (est. 2005) has allowed private consumers to participate as well. These companies let anybody print bound books with minimal effort at low cost, and practically no financial risk for the author.[4] While it is possible to produce just a single copy for private use, these services also offer integration into the commercial book market by allocating ISBNs and selling their customers' titles on either their own websites or those of commercial booksellers, such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble.

Syjuco's *Phantoms* is an example of the use of POD as artistic practice. But, one might further ask, is it also a work of literature? Syjuco's books lack many of the characteristics that determine the literary discourse to which commercial POD unquestionably belongs. Rather, *Phantoms* seems to take part in the system of art: despite the inherent reproducibility of POD, the books do not circulate, are not disseminated, and have no pretensions for finding an expansive readership; they do not refer to, comment on, or interfere with the rules and practices of the system of literature. And although these books are fabricated by a technology that ensures virtually infinite print runs, they are treated as unique objects, bound to the space of the installation and the time of its exhibition. Not least, they adhere to the logic of the art market, which produces value through scarcity.

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[1] Stephanie Syjuco, *Phantoms (H__RT _F D_RKN_SS) and related works*, accessed August 10, 2015, http://www.stephaniesyjuco.com/p_phantoms.html.

[2] Ann Haugland, "Opening the Gates: Print On-Demand Publishing as Cultural Production," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2006): 3–16.

[3] Kelly Gallagher, "Print-on-Demand: New Models and Value Creation," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2014): 244–248.

[4] At the time of writing (Summer/Fall 2015), Lulu.com charged $3.85 for a 200-page paperback in US trade size (6×9 inches), and $13.13 for the hardcover equivalent. The royalties for the author-publisher depend on the selling price set by the author, but far exceed those of traditional publishers. Yet Lulu does not offer any copyediting or other types of quality control, and for POD providers who do, like Barnes & Noble's NOOK Press, prices can quickly go up to a thousand dollars or more.

It matters whether a POD book is read as an artwork or as literary text, and not only because, from the perspective of reception, the interpretative arsenal and thus the evaluation of the work differ. The artist's arsenal of production—the methods and strategies available to them—also varies considerably depending on the system in which they decide to operate. Indeed, a whole subculture has developed that deliberately chooses the system of literature, and not art, to investigate the bond between digital and analog by employing POD. It is not through the technology's application in commercial publishing, but rather through consumer-use POD providers, that a new genre of literature has consolidated. Lulu and Blurb have not only provided the means of production and distribution, which led to the emergence of a range of publishing platforms like Gauss PDF and Troll Thread; through the constraints of the medium of POD, they also helped shape a genre that fuses elements of Conceptual writing, electronic literature, and what was once, in Soviet formalism, called factography. This genre might be called *post-digital literature*. Like *Phantoms*, it plays on the strange status of POD as at once analog and digital; but unlike Syjuco's work, it scrutinizes the implications of this ambiguity through decidedly literary means.

I propose that we view exponents of this current as forging a new interchange between publishing technology, dissemination strategy, and textual genre. This development is symptomatic of a larger cultural shift toward digital technization, and of the fact that the object produced by POD is paradigmatically post-digital in its ontology. But because the meaning of these terms is not self-evident, let me start with some basic considerations.

POD as Post-Digital

In *Post-Digital Print*, Alessandro Ludovico writes that "the death of paper—in retrospect, one of the most unfortunate and embarrassing prophecies of the information age—has obviously not happened."[5] In his account of the development of independent and neo-avant-garde publishing, paper hasn't been replaced by screens, and, on the contrary, the relationship between digital and analog turns out to be not antagonistic, but complementary: "Digital is the paradigm for content and quantity of information; analogue is the paradigm for usability and interfacing."[6] Because the book, rather than the screen, is the most user-friendly and offers the best interface for the engagement with text, it will survive. More importantly, however, Ludovico maintains that it is increasingly the very materiality of books that gives them their cultural weight. A digital file, or more precisely, one represented on a digital reading-device, seems fleeting, cheap, and less serious than a tangible "post-digital" object. This is what makes POD so popular.[7]

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[5] Alessandro Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894* (Eindhoven / Rotterdam: Onomatopee 77, 2012), 29.

[6] Ibid., 153.

[7] Ibid., 70.

[8] Melvin L. Alexenberg, *The Future of Art in a Postdigital Age: From Hellenistic to Hebraic Consciousness*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Intellect, 2011), 10; Florian Cramer, "What is 'Post-Digital'?" *APRJA* 3, no. 1 (2014), accessed June 22, 2015, http://www.aprja.net/?p=1318, now also in: David M. Berry and Michael Dieter, eds., *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 12–26. One could argue that in this interpretation, "post-digital" describes a pervasive cultural *mood* of discontent with the digital, as testified by the increasing ennoblement of the thing in art, theory, and everyday life. The rise of thing and materiality theories would then be the academic equivalent to the auratization of the post-digital, the handcrafted and artisanal, in the kind of tweed-and-embossed-cowhide semiotics that rose to the epitome of futurist style in the 2013 film *Her*, which seems so plausible a depiction of the future precisely because it so obviously announces the longing for tangible substance.

The term "post-digital" is often employed to denote the recuperated value of materiality. Mel Alexenberg has called the post-digital a longing for the "humanization of digital technologies," and Florian Cramer considers it the state of "disenchantment with new media," as well as a flight from the increasing hegemony of digital technology toward DIY culture.[8] But it seems odd to use the term post-digital for POD, not only because it is a form of digital printing (and not something "truly analog," like, say, silkscreen), but because its outcomes often look cheap and lack the very quality that "post-digital" seems to indicate (just look at the blindingly white paper, template typesetting, and often imperfect binding of most any recent academic book).

POD is not post-digital in this sense of a nostalgia for materiality-as-quality. Rather, I would like to understand it in epochal and ontological terms, and follow an observation made by Cramer: "'Post-digital' […] refers to a state in which the disruption brought about by digital information technology has already occurred."[9] POD is post-digital because it points to the historicity of this disruption and makes it perceptible.

Technization and the Post-Digital

What does it mean for a technology to no longer be new? German philosopher Hans Blumenberg made a distinction between "technology" and "technization."[10] *Technology* suggests itself as discrete matters of fact in the objectivity of its artifacts. Once introduced, it is there, only to be replaced by better, newer technology. *Technization*, on the other hand, is the ongoing process by which technology fades into the background of our everyday experience. Blumenberg called this quotidian consciousness the "life-world," a term borrowed from Edmund Husserl, who defined it as the "realm of original self-evidences."[11]

For Blumenberg, the life-world is that which in its unquestionable obviousness (*Evidenz*, often translated "self-

[9] Cramer, "What is 'Post-Digital'?"

[10] Hans Blumenberg, "Lebenswelt und Technisierung unter Aspekten der Phänomenologie," in *Schriften zur Technik*, ed. Alexander Schmitz and Bernd Stiegler (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015), 163–202. Translations from foreign sources mine, unless otherwise noted.

[11] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 127. Blumenberg modifies the concept of "life-world" considerably. For him, it does not describe an actual state, but acts as a "limit concept" (*Grenzbegriff*), that is, something that can only be inferred but never actually reached. Absolute life-world would be the absence of all resistance to reality. He offers another name: "paradise." Hans Blumenberg, *Theorie der Lebenswelt*, ed. Manfred Sommer (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 34, 50.

evidence") lacks all resistance that would make it stick out as conspicuous. Similar to Heidegger's "readiness-to-hand,"[12] but without his scorn of technology, Blumenberg described technization as the slow sinking-into-the-life-world of what was once artificial, unnatural, obtrusive, and novel. Any technology is, in the process of technization, "always-already" on the way toward this transparency, and becoming invisible to its users. Only a sudden event of resistance can disturb this process and make it apparent—a resistance that, as I will show, POD provides.

It seems that, with the initial rise of digital technology more than a generation behind us, we are now experiencing a threshold moment of such technization. The fact that something is produced, distributed, or perceived by digital means is no longer the first thing we notice about it, if we notice it at all. Digital technology is in the process of losing resistance to our experience of reality. Gradually, as Blumenberg writes, "The artificial reality, the foreigner among the encountered things of nature, sinks back into the 'universe of what is pre-given as obvious,' the life-world."[13]

If today's subjects of technization are digital technology and its practices, then the outcome of this process—their having become life-world—might be called "the digital." Thus understood, the digital is, first, the epistemological integral of digital technology; Blumenberg calls this a "*concept of reality*," that is, something that conditions the experience of the world without itself being apparent as a factor.[14] But because this process of digital technization is not complete (after all, we can still be aware of it), the digital does not yet determine our life-world absolutely. The digital can therefore also describe, second, a *temporality*, a threshold moment that is precariously situated not between the old and the new, but the "opaquely" novel and the "transparently" evident; it vacillates between the no-longer and the not-yet.[15]

If the digital is a concept of reality or a temporality, increasingly transparent to scrutiny, the post-digital is what performs the sudden yank that makes it apparent again. It provokes a disharmony in the structure of the obvious, thus drawing attention to it, and makes the process of technization experienceable. The post-digital denotes the *ontological status* of an object, ambiguously lodged between the already-evident and the still-new. As soon as it is possible to question which category applies in a given case, the post-digital offers the resistance necessary to bring back to consciousness the otherwise elusive process of technization and its resulting concept of reality.

What this means is that we don't live in a post-digital, but very much a digital moment. The digital and the post-digital are not opposed terms, nor does the post-digital come

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[12] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962), 98.

[13] Blumenberg, "Lebenswelt und Technisierung," 190; he quotes Husserl, *Crisis*, 180.

[14] Hans Blumenberg, "The Concept of Reality and the Possibility of the Novel," in *New Perspectives in German Literary Criticism: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Richard E. Amacher and Victor Lange (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 29–48. My description of the "concept of reality" is too abbreviated to do it justice and it deserves more explanation than I can provide here. My point is that it makes sense to differentiate between the transparency of technology and the transparency of the way this first transparency changes our experience of reality.

[15] Understanding "the digital" as epistemic and temporal category might help to restrain the term again somewhat after its recent over-expansion, which has threatened to wipe out for good any residue of meaning left in this already highly vague concept; see Alexander Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

"after" the digital. Rather, they operate on different categorical planes: As a concept of reality/temporality, the digital is what is disclosed by the ambiguous ontology of the post-digital. With Vilém Flusser, one could call the post-digital object an *Unding*—an object suspended between ontological states.[16] A book produced by POD technology has the potential to be a post-digital *Unding*. Its vacillating states are usually described as "analog" and "digital," its forms of presence as material and immaterial. The most notable way in which it embodies its ontological ambiguity is in the relation between file and product.

POD has an inherent connection to a digital file; its very existence relies on the creation of a digital master from which the copies of the book are made. While this is true of almost any book printed today, with POD this connection between file and object is especially unstable. Because of the ease of production and dissemination that services like Lulu and Blurb provide, it can be investigated, manipulated, and thrown into crisis by artistic and literary means (Syjuco's *Phantoms* already hint in this direction). In turn, as we shall see, the attributes of the file are determined by the material constraints of POD. Any inclination to hierarchize the two elements—the text and the book, the immaterial and its materialization—thus inevitably fails. "Electronic textuality is [...] locatable, even though we are not accustomed to thinking of it in physical terms,"[17] Matthew Kirschenbaum pointed out in discussing a "forensic" approach to storage media. This idea holds for POD as *Unding*, too; few things illustrate "the heterogeneity of digital data and its embodied inscriptions" as well as this post-digital object does.[18]

Infrathin Platforms: Gauss PDF, Troll Thread, 0x0a, Traumawien

This heterogeneity informs both the focus of investigation and the mode of production in a recent literary current that could be called post-digital literature, whose dissemination strategy combines digital publishing and POD. Notable authors include Holly Melgard, Joey Yearous-Algozin, Steve McLaughlin, and Gregor Weichbrodt; notable publishers are Gauss PDF in the US and Traumawien in Europe. Sometimes, the term "publisher" is avoided in favor of designations like "publishing collective," as in the case of Troll Thread, or *Textkollektiv*, as with my own project, 0x0a.[19]

Whatever these entities call themselves, they execute the "publishing gesture"[20] that is a minimum requirement for partaking in literature as a social system. Even in the digital, this gesture remains necessary. The status of a PDF file available on a private website changes considerably once the very same file has been "published" on the website of a "publisher."[21] J. Gordon Faylor, the operator of gauss-pdf.com, has thus called his practice of hosting files not only "publishing" but also providing an "infrathin platform for the staging of submitted works."[22] Gauss PDF does little more than what authors could do on their own given a modicum of digital competence. But in a literary system largely devoid of monetary expectations, this staging has a social rather than a commercial function. It not only makes public but also publicizes; it offers recognizability, multiplication, and an advance of trust for the author.

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[16] Vilém Flusser, "Das Unding I & II", in *Dinge und Undinge: Phänomenologische Skizzen* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1993), 80–89; English as Vilém Flusser, "The Non-Thing I & II," in *The Shape of Things: A Philosophy of Design*, trans. Anthony Mathews (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 85–94. It is hard to find a suitable English equivalent for the German term *Unding*. While the lexical meaning is "absurdity," it literally translates as "non-thing," and this is how the English version renders it. But it is a peculiarity of the German language to retain what is apparently negated by the prefix "un-." Rather, it qualifies something as questionable in its essence: An *Unmensch* is not a non-human but an inhumane one, and an *Unkraut* is not a non-plant, but one that is not wanted, or in the wrong place: a weed. Similarly, an *Unding* is a thing whose very thing-ness is in question. Jean-François Lyotard employed a similar ambiguity when he used the plural for the title of his 1985 Centre Pompidou exhibition "Les Immatériaux." Taking Lyotard as a cue, a possible translation for *Unding* could thus be "immatter."

[17] Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 3.

[18] Ibid., 6.

[19] www.gauss-pdf.com; www.traumawien.at; www.trollthread.tumblr.com; www.0x0a.li (all accessed August 10, 2015). There are certainly many more platforms/publishers, like Truck Books or basbooks, but I believe that their practices are well represented by the ones discussed here.

[20] Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, 67.

Gauss PDF was founded in 2010 as an online platform for "digitally based works."[23] It publishes Google docs and zip files as much as movs and mp3s. "Who's to say that something as miniscule or ephemeral as a JPG or hyperlink (i.e. an HTML file) couldn't be considered as much a publication or circumscribed production as a 300-page book or a collection of MP3s?" says Faylor.[24] While it still publishes digital submissions, Gauss PDF has followed a trend in contemporary experimental literature of turning away from purely digital publications to a post-digital form of dissemination: a dual strategy of web and print-on-demand publishing. In 2013, Faylor started the imprint GPDF Editions. Each title is free for download as a PDF, and can be purchased as a POD book on Lulu.com. "With little more than a working knowledge of the [Lulu publication] wizard, one can easily bypass editorial intervention, marketing strategies, and the general publicity bullshit that bolsters most literary markets."[25] Faylor chose Lulu as the "most efficacious way to manage hasty production at a relatively low cost. I bet TROLLTHREAD agrees."[26]

It does: Troll Thread, using a Tumblr with a simple theme as a website, has used this model since its inception in late 2010. At first limited to a small group of authors, increasingly it publishes the work of others, too. Thus, the term "publishing collective" has been both chosen and dismissed, and Troll Thread's exact status is unclear even among its members:

> "Chris Sylvester: [...] It was careless, largely sloppy. Lazy disregard for convention or standard operating procedures or whatever. Troll Thread started on a whim: publish what we wanted when we wanted. This shambling-ness still happens. That's why Troll Thread is a tumblr and not a press and I like that.

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[21] This is *contra* Florian Cramer, "Post-Digital Writing," in *Code and Concept: Literature and the Digital*, ed. Hannes Bajohr, (Berlin: Frohmann, 2016): "In the 21st century, even the primary criterion of literature has become obsolete: that it must be published. On the Internet, the classical distinction between non-published personal writing and published writing is moot, and with it the distinction between everyday communication and publishing." This position overlooks the fact that the perlocutionary part of a speech act (and the publishing gesture is one) depends in its outcome on the identity and the status of the agent performing it: It makes a difference *who* publishes *what* in *which context*. The blindness to these conditions accounts for much of the crushed hopes of early Internet utopianism.

[22] Caleb Beckwith, "Interview with J. Gordon Faylor," accessed June 24, 2015, http://theconversant.org/?p=8426. It is important to note that the "PDF" in Gauss PDF is not supposed to refer to the file format but the Gauss probability distribution function in statistics—although it is clear that the association with the file type is very much encouraged.

[23] Kristen Gallagher, "The Gauss interview: Chris Alexander talks to J. Gordon Faylor," accessed June 24, 2015, http://jacket2.org/commentary/gauss-interview.

[24] J. Gordon Faylor, "Lulu Kind," in *Code and Concept*, ed. Hannes Bajohr (Berlin: Frohmann, 2016).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Tan Lin, "Gauss PDF Interview with J. Gordon Faylor," accessed June 24, 2015, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2014/05/gauss-pdf-interview-with-j-gordon-faylor/?woo.

> Holly Melgard: But Chris, TT is too a press. How is it just a tumblr? TT is a press that publishes using a tumblr and Lulu Print On Demand. TT publishes each poem by uploading it onto Lulu and then linking it to tumblr in the form of both a downloadable .pdf ebook for free and a P.O.D. book for purchase."[27]

The PDF/POD dual publishing model has since become a soft standard for experimental writing, and has even been copied by the art establishment. The 2014 Zurich exhibition *Poetry Will Be Made By All*, co-curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Kenneth Goldsmith, featured books by authors born after 1989; on the accompanying website, all titles could either be downloaded or purchased on Lulu.[28] German author Gregor Weichbrodt, whose output was represented in Zurich with the book *On the Road for 17,527 Miles* (a list of Google Maps driving instructions recreating the route of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*), started his own writer's collective, 0x0a, in 2014 (of which I am the co-founder). On its website, Weichbrodt has re-issued the book, with a new design and 0x0a as the publisher, again as PDF and Lulu print.[29] Such re-dressing and re-contextualizing has become especially easy with POD.

Another influential platform is Vienna-based Traumawien. Founded, like its American peers, in 2010, Traumawien is a self-described "paradoxical print publisher." The paradox here, as co-founder Lukas Gross wrote in a mission statement, consists in "transferring late-breaking digital aesthetics into book form."[30] The form of the book means that these aesthetics are not merely a conceptual feint—they are actually meant to be read. Traumawien's is a decidedly literary gesture, not one belonging to the visual arts. J. R. Carpenter spells out the underlying assumptions thusly: "The vast majority of the text produced by computer systems—protocols, listings, listings [sic], logs, algorithms, binary codes—is never seen or read by humans. This text is nonetheless internal to our daily thoughts and actions. As such, Traumawien considers these new structures to be literary."[31]

While the presentation of these entities might differ considerably—whereas Gauss PDF and Troll Thread are often intentionally obscure, rarely offering any description of their publications, 0x0a and Traumawien tend to explain and interpret their work[32]—there are some basic similarities that allow for grouping these platforms together: Apart from the dual publishing strategy of PDF file and POD book, they rely on the Internet as the sole medium of distribution, and combine elements of Conceptual writing and generative electronic literature.

[27] Tan Lin, "Troll Thread Interview," accessed June 24, 2015, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2014/05/troll-thread-interview.

[28] "Poetry will be made by all!" accessed August 10, 2015, http://poetrywillbemadebyall.com/library. So far, the exhibition, co-curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Kenneth Goldsmith, lists 131 poets.

[29] Gregor Weichbrodt, "On the Road," accessed August 10, 2015, http://0x0a.li/en/text/on-the-road.

[30] Lukas Gross, "Traumawien Statement February 2010," accessed August 10, 2015, http://traumawien.at/about.

[31] J. R. Carpenter, "Paradoxical print publishers TRAUMAWIEN," accessed August 29, 2015, http://jacket2.org/commentary/paradoxical-print-publishers-traumawien.

[32] In the case of Troll Thread, there is not even a hint as to what it is; the "about" page offers the vaguely Fichtean equation: "TROLL THREAD IS TROLL THREAD." The difference can at least somewhat be explained by the fact that the US-based platforms are part of a literary discourse that is more open to, and more acquainted with, the aesthetics of Conceptual poetry; more about this in the next section.

"A Genre unto Itself": Elements of Post-Digital Literature

If POD is a post-digital *Unding* that by virtue of its inherent ontological ambiguity makes the process of technization experienceable, then any POD book should be able to carry out this destabilization, and this is certainly so. But what characterizes the post-digital literature of platforms like Gauss PDF, 0x0a, Troll Thread, and Traumawien is that it highlights and exacerbates this destabilizing potential. What unites their various strategies and elevates them to the level of literary genre is that they all proceed from an acute awareness of the latent self-disclosure of post-digital objects in their structure, production, and dissemination.

I would now like to look at two elements of this genre that seem to characterize it especially well: The influence of generative and conceptual practices that play with the status of the connection between file and object, and the turn to factography, a type of writing that takes as its topic the structural, socioeconomic, and material conditions of its production.

A) The Generative and the Conceptual Element

Many of the titles that these platforms offer as POD books and PDFs are, in a way, anti-books. They are rarely intended to be read closely, but rather flipped through, or just thought about.[33] Sometimes, thorough reading is discouraged by content; sometimes, by the sheer quantity of the published material. Many works exhibit an anti-expressive sentiment, and revel in the excessive, combining strategies of Conceptual writing on the one hand and electronic literature on the other. Computer-generated literature is based on the ability to produce large amounts of texts automatically, and has an almost natural tendency toward inundation. Conceptualism, understood as letting the idea of a work take precedence over its material form or the experience of that form, often relishes the conflict between an idea and the limits of its realizability—just think of Douglas Huebler's *Variable Piece #70 (In Process) Global* (1971), in which he proposed "to photographically document the existence of everyone alive." Both modes of production, because of the rule-following inherent to them, have a penchant for displacing the author-subject, and giving the outcome an aesthetic autonomy even as it devalues its status as "work."[34]

However, neither electronic literature nor Conceptual writing seems to fully encompass post-digital literature. The "return to print" performed by these platforms stands counter to the purported genealogy of electronic literature "as a continuation of experimental print literature,"[35] thus suggesting some kind of directional development. Post-digital literature rejects this teleological trajectory; as I have shown, it rather highlights the connection between object and file, insisting on the work's status as post-digital *Unding*. Similarly, J. Gordon Faylor deems the association with Conceptualism accidental,[36] and Troll Thread member Joey Yearous-Algozin considers "this writing as coming *after* conceptual writing. It couldn't have been made without that break, but in the permission it afforded us, something different emerged." While both electronic literature and Conceptual writing are influences, "this work has become a genre unto itself."[37]

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[33] "Joey Yearous-Algozin: [...] I think people read TT in passing and sporadically. We know from Lulu that only a few people actually buy the physical books." Lin, "Troll Thread Interview."

[34] Especially for Conceptualism, these arguments have become commonplace, and the backlash against them has already begun; see Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Craig Dworkin, "The Fate of Echo," in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011), xxiii–liv.

[35] N. Katherine Hayles, *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 17.

These self-descriptions certainly must be taken with a grain of salt; they are more apt for some works than for others. For instance, Traumawien has professed a focus on "networked texts, algorithmic texts, interfictions, chatlogs, codeworks, software art and visual mashup prose,"[38] and published a book by Australian codeworks writer Mez Breeze, whose poetry appropriates the look and vocabulary of programming languages (*Human Readable Messages*, 2011). Conversely, a book like Lawrence Giffin's *Ex Tempore* (Troll Thread, 2011) seems to be what one could call an "old fashioned" Conceptual writing project. Each of its 5,000 lines contains nothing but the time of day, typed out manually by Giffin, over a period of 24 hours. It begins: "It is now 12:00:00 AM on October 28, 2011,"[39] and ends, 163 pages later: "It is now 11:59:59 PM on October 28, 2011."[40] Combining performance and self-constraint, it is written in the vein of Kenneth Goldsmith's *Soliloquy* (2001) and *Day* (2003), in which Goldsmith wrote down everything he said in the span of a week, and retyped an entire edition of the *New York Times*, respectively.[41] But simply by being published in the context of Troll Thread, the fact that *Ex Tempore* was typed—and not copied and pasted, or generated by code—is alternately highlighted and called into doubt, raising the suspicion that it was not produced in the asserted manual way (how to start exactly at 12 am? how to reach exactly 5,000 lines?). This suspicion is enough to give it a post-digital status, making apparent the digital as a concept of reality, which *Day* did not (yet) have.

An actual combination of electronic literature and Conceptual writing strategies can be found in Stephen McLaughlin's *Puniverse* (Gauss PDF, 2014). "An ingenuous crossing of an idiom set and a rhyming dictionary" (as the subtitle reads), *Puniverse* plays through all rhyming combinations of the elements of a given number of idioms, producing a plethora of "puns." An expression like "a bad egg" is multiplied thusly:

> "an ad egg / an add egg / a brad egg / a cad egg / a chad egg / a clad egg / a dad egg / a fad egg / a gad egg / a glad egg / a grad egg / a had egg / a lad egg / a mad egg / a nad egg / a pad egg / a plaid egg / a rad egg / a sad egg / a scad egg / a shad egg / a tad egg / a bad beg / a bad keg / a bad leg / a bad meg / a bad peg / a bad segue."[42]

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[36] "Given the accessibility and contemporaneity of its affect, Conceptual methods have accrued a wider audience since 2010, doubtless. But despite precipitating some misleading characterizations of GPDF (e.g. that it only publishes Conceptual work), this has mostly been an invigorating development. [...] GPDF acts merely as a feasible place for Conceptual works to land among other types of work; there is certainly no direct or overarching affiliation." Lin, "Gauss PDF Interview."

[37] Lin, "Troll Thread Interview," emphasis mine.

[38] Gross, "Traumawien Statement."

[39] Lawrence Giffin, *Ex Tempore* (Troll Thread, 2011), 5.

[40] Ibid., 168.

[41] It is also almost impossible not to think of On Kawara's "date paintings," which, however, have not been read as literature, at least not to my knowledge.

[42] Steven McLaughlin, *Puniverse*, vol. 1 (Gauss PDF, 2014), n.p. [8 in PDF].

(Note that the original phrase is not included and has to be inferred.) McLaughlin achieves this output with minimal effort: All that is needed is to execute a script that checks the elements of the finite idiom set for the rhymes of their sub-elements, and returns the results; yet the outcome of this function, once printed, requires 57 volumes of Lulu books.

This type of generative Conceptual literature—constructed, not found; written, but by code—heightens the rupturing gesture of post-digital technization once it is put back into book form, not least through the joy of the excessive that equips the work with an inner aesthetic tension. While *Puniverse* can be circulated as a PDF file—and indeed is—it still requires the *possibility* of being printed in order to achieve its vertiginous effect. As in much of Conceptual literature, its potential, so to speak, is its potentiality, and it very well might be that actualization neutralizes the tension derived from its "wastefulness"; such an accumulation of print could be more sculptural than literary. But what is important is that it *can* be actualized, and Lulu will do it for a mere $381.90.

If McLaughlin's text achieves its expansiveness by a combinatory operation, another way to elicit such an overwhelming effect is to willingly offer only a slice of the vastness implicit in a concept. This is what is achieved by Gregor Weichbrodt's generative work *I Don't Know* (0x0a/Frohmann Verlag, 2015). The text is created by a Python script that concatenates the titles of linked Wikipedia articles with a set of stock phrases. The result is a soliloquy in which a narrator denies knowledge of the subjects they list. It begins:

> "I'm not well-versed in Literature. Sensibility—what is that? What in God's name is An Afterword? I haven't the faintest idea. And concerning Book design, I am fully ignorant. What is 'A Slipcase' supposed to mean again, and what the heck is Boriswood? The Canons of page construction—I don't know what that is. I haven't got a clue. How am I supposed to make sense of Traditional Chinese bookbinding, and what the hell is an Initial?"[43]

As Julia Pelta Feldman observes, the narrator's questioning "skews from the absurd—'I don't know what people mean by 'A Building'' [...] to the perfectly reasonable: 'Vinca alkaloids are unfamiliar to me. And I'm sorry, did you say 'Vinpocetine'?'"[44] More often than not, the text undermines itself: "I'm completely ignorant of Art Deco architecture in Arkansas. Can you tell me how to get to The Drew County Courthouse, Dual State Monument, Rison Texaco Service Station or Chicot County Courthouse?"[45] The reader, Feldman writes, can hardly fail to acknowledge this incongruity: "I don't know about you, but the narrator of *I Don't Know* knows a hell of a lot more about Arkansas's architectural history than I do."[46] And after having jumped, in truly Latourian fashion, from literature to book binding, to soccer, to architecture, and a plethora of other topics that are only connected through Wikipedia's internal genus-species relation, the book ends after 351 pages, seemingly unaware of yet another performative contradiction:

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[43] Gregor Weichbrodt, *I Don't Know* (0x0a/Frohmann Verlag, 2015), 4. For this book, Weichbrodt cooperated with e-book publisher Frohmann Verlag; while the e-pub can be purchased through the publisher, the POD can be ordered from Lulu.

[44] Julia Pelta Feldman, "Gregor Weichbrodt: No Offense," accessed November 5, 2015, http://0x0a.li/en/gregor-weichbrodt-no-offense.

[45] Weichbrodt, *I Don't Know*, 212.

[46] Feldman, "Gregor Weichbrodt."

> "I've never heard of Postmodernism. What the hell is A Dystopia? I don't know what people mean by 'The Information Age.' Digitality—dunno. The Age of Interruption? How should I know? What is Information Overload? I don't know."[47]

That the text closes here is almost too good to be true, and again, it raises a suspicion—this time of authorial intervention: Wikipedia's taxonomical structure could indubitably fill more pages—but how many exactly? By withholding the answer, and choosing a very deliberate point for the text to break off ("Information Overload"), the text conjures a feeling of sublimity similar to *Puniverse*, precisely because the expanses of the unknown are unknown; it certainly adds to this effect that *I Don't Know* is a long reminder of the vastness of individual ignorance in the times of networked communication.

McLaughlin and Weichbrodt's texts, no matter whether they are spelled out completely or appear abridged, are finite. There is an end in sight, and this end is determined by the logic of the system employed, be it the entirety of Wikipedia, or the number of total iterations in a non-recursive function that couples list items. As soon as recursive functions—functions that call themselves—are employed, however, things change. Executed on a computer, a recursive function lacking a set breakpoint would either run forever or, more often, overflow the computer's memory and cause it to crash. A text thus produced is potentially infinite; its finitude is again an index of intervention, authorial or otherwise.

This vector into infinity remains even if this recursion is done manually. In Lawrence Giffin's *Non Facit Saltus* (Troll Thread, 2014), each page is an explanation of how to reach the next. For example, page 13 reads: "If you want to go to page 14, turn to page 14."[48] It is a very basic recursive function, that of incrementation, but without an external criterion for when to stop, it could go on forever. In Giffin's case, this criterion is provided by the finite and discrete structure of the book. Because of the book's spatio-temporal stability (as opposed to a stream of potentially infinite text, as in the case of Twitter bots), it references distinct pages that can be "called" independently (this would not work with a scrollable page or a mere text file); because of the unambiguous imperative "turn!" they require the materialization of the object, or, as metaphorized ones, the simulated makeup of the book: a PDF. Again, we find the structure of file and object pointing back and forth to one another—another post-digital self-disclosure.

B) The Factographic Element

While relative document layouts, like Word files or e-pubs, allow for a text to be "reflowed" responsively for every conceivable output device,[49] a PDF, just like the page of a book, is

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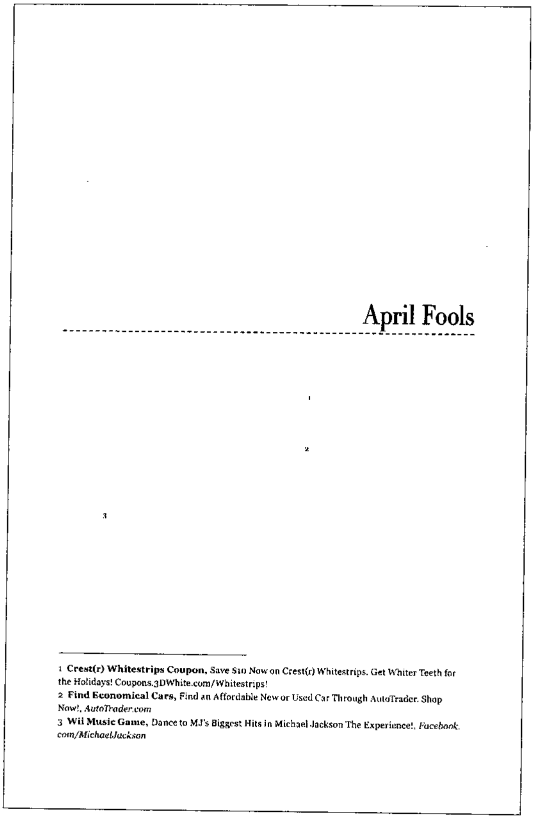
[47] Ibid., 352.

[48] Lawrence Giffin, *Non Facit Saltus* (Troll Thread, 2014), 13.

[49] Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print*, 98.



April Fools

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1 **Crest(r) Whitestrips Coupon,** Save $10 Now on Crest(r) Whitestrips. Get Whiter Teeth for the Holidays! Coupons.3DWhite.com/Whitestrips!
2 **Find Economical Cars,** Find an Affordable New or Used Car Through AutoTrader. Shop Now!, *AutoTrader.com*
3 **Wii Music Game,** Dance to MJ's Biggest Hits in Michael Jackson The Experience!, *Facebook.com/MichaelJackson*

Fig. 1. Jason Huff and Mimi Cabell, *American Psycho* (Traumawien, 2012), 3.

absolute in its layout. The de-facto standard of commercial e-publishing, aimed at Kindles and iPads, is the e-pub format; for the experimental platforms here described, the specifications of the commercial POD providers made PDFs their standard. Thus, not only do the constraints of a service like Lulu's (maximum number of pages, page size, etc.) inform the way the POD book is created, disseminated, and perceived, but they also have reverberations for the form of the text: the formatting of the POD book influences the formatting of its underlying file, and vice versa.[50]

A direct riff on this interplay is Joey Yearous-Algozin's *9/11 911 Calls in 911 Pt. Font* (Troll Thread, 2012). It contains what its title announces: nine-hundred-and-eleven characters from a New York Fire Department transcript of calls to 911 on September 11, 2001. Because they are set in a font size of 911 points, the text extends onto a little under 900 PDF pages (mostly, a single letter fills one page, but occasionally it is two). A text that would scarcely occupy the screen of a Kindle is stretched to the size of two heavy volumes. Since the dimensions of the PDF follow Lulu standards, the char-

[50] See Harry Burke, "Page Break," *Texte zur Kunst* 98 (2015): 118, also online: accessed August 29, 2015, https://www.textezurkunst.de/98/burke-page-break. Burke acknowledges that "PDFs [...] gain authority by looking and functioning like a page." But this is only half the story. While he highlights a leftover element of high-brow book fetishism, he overlooks that it is the commercial and technological substructure of POD itself that prescribes this format. The page/PDF relationship is dictated by current technological needs rather than by overcome values.

acters shown on each page are cut off, making the resulting text almost illegible.[51] As soon as it is highlighted in a PDF viewer and copied, it is possible to view it in its short entirety; the text "hides" under the constraints of the printed page but is left legible in the file.

American Psycho by Jason Huff and Mimi Cabell (Traumawien, 2012) plays on the relationship between three materializations of the text: The PDF and the POD book, and also the original layout of Brett Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*, on which both instantiations are based [fig. 1]. The entirety of Ellis's novel was sent back and forth "between two GMail accounts page by page." Huff and Cabell then "saved the relational ads for each page and added them back into the text as footnotes. [...] The constellations of footnoted ads throughout these pages retell the story of *American Psycho* in absence of the original text."[52] While the main aim of their work is the privacy-encroaching advertising model that fuels the Google empire, *American Psycho*'s conceptual framework requires the closest possible resemblance between source and outcome, book, file, and POD.

Works like these become self-aware of the conditions of their production and gain the flavor of what a certain current in Soviet formalism called "factography." Probably its best known description is Sergei Tret'iakov's essay "The Biography of the Object" (1929). Tret'iakov proposed to center a novel not around the psychology of the protagonist, but the production process of an object, thus doing away with bourgeois subjectivity, anthropocentrism, and obliviousness to socioeconomic processes. The biography of the object, "extremely useful as a cold shower for littérateurs," is constructed like a "conveyor belt along which a unit of raw material is moved and transformed into a useful product through human effort."[53] Instead of *The Brothers Karamazov*, such factography could have titles like "*The Forest*, *Bread*, *Coal*, *Iron*, *Flax*, *Cotton*, *Paper*, *The Locomotive*, and *The Factory*."[54]

While Tret'iakov still had a representational, world-depicting model in mind—a realist novel for things, not persons—the post-digital literature considered here makes factography perform itself. Yearous-Algozin and Huff/Cabell focus on the intricate and often circular relationship between file and object. They do not "say" anything, as one could put it with Wittgenstein,[55] about digital technization but "show" it by thematizing this relationship performatively; instead of directly writing the biography of the thing, the *Unding* reveals its story on its own.

If factography here addresses the medial aspects of the underlying data structures, in some works such

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[51] The full text of the two volumes fits in a footnote: "FDNY 911 Calls Transcript - Fire - Part 9 9-11-01: WORLD TRADE CENTER, 911 FDNY TELEPHONE CALLS RECORDER: This is Fire Alarm Dispatcher Carlos Sanchez of Fire Dispatch Operations. This is a continuation of Citywide Job Number 5-38 which was originally recorded on September 11, 2001. The following will be a series of phone alarms which were received on Brooklyn Master Tape Number 505. Message number 0001-B, which was received on Channel Number 4, and it commences at 0800 hours, 50 minutes and 24 seconds. DISPATCHER: Fire Dispatcher 414. What's the address? OPERATOR: There's a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. I couldn't get through to Manhattan. DISPATCHER: Okay. We're aware P.D. 414. OPERATOR: Okay. RECORDER: Message Number 0001-B concludes at 0800 hours, 50 minutes and 34 seconds. Please stand by for Message Number 0002-B. A telephone alarm received on Channel Number 4. The message commences at 0800 hours, 50 m."

[52] Jason Huff and Mimi Cabell, "American Psycho," accessed August 11, 2015, http://traumawien.at/prints/american-psycho.

[53] Sergei Tret'iakov, "The Biography of the Object," [1929] *October* 118 (2006): 57–62, 61.

[54] Ibid., 62.

[55] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge 2002), 4.1212, 31.

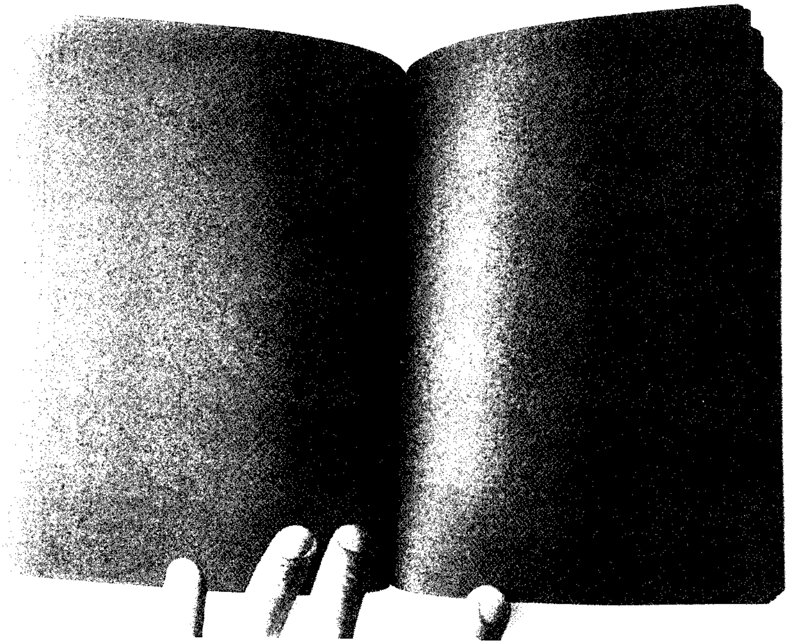

Fig. 2. Jean Keller, *The Black Book* (Lulu, 2013). Photo: Hannes Bajohr.

factographical showing extends to the socioeconomic conditions of their production. Jean Keller's *The Black Book* (self published, 2013) is a good example of this type of factography-as-publishing [fig. 2]. It is a tome of 740 pages—the maximum number allowed by Lulu—that is completely black. A gallon of ink used for POD printing costs over four thousand dollars, Keller explains on the Lulu sales page:

> "However, the price of a book is not calculated according to the amount of ink used in its production. For example, a Lulu book of blank pages costs an artist as much to produce as a book filled with text or large photographs. Furthermore, as the number of pages increases, the price of each page decreases. A book containing the maximum number of pages printed entirely in black ink therefore results in the lowest cost and maximum value for the artist."[56]

At first appearing parasitic, even sabotaging, since it raises the possibility that Lulu might lose money printing it, *The Black Book* is a reminder that post-digital writers are enmeshed in negotiations about their productive resources just like any other artist; resorting to an act of subversion like Keller's "hack" makes apparent that writers get the short end of the stick as they represent Lulu's main revenue stream.

In *Reimbur$ement* (Troll Thread, 2013), Holly Melgard similarly exhibits the limits of post-digital writing and the precariousness of the author's labor conditions by focusing on the dissemination, rather than the material production, of the work. In the introduction, she states: "Sometimes the work I do results in earning neither income, livelihood, nor play, and often I find myself paying to work rather than being paid for work. Whenever this happens, I count my losses and take my chances gambling for alternatives."[57]

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[56] Jean Keller, "The Black Book," accessed August 12, 2015, http://www.lulu.com/shop/jean-keller/the-black-book/paperback/product-21008894.html.

This is meant quite literally: The book is filled with scans of lottery tickets and scratch cards—six years worth of gambling for "$ for life." Because Lulu lets its producers set the selling price at will while the costs of production remain the same, Melgard's book is $329.53, the equivalent of her gambling losses, "plus whatever Lulu charges for its print on demand services."[58] It is at once a utopian and a commonsensical project, as it demands no more than pay equivalent to labor—"Reimbursement is for the work"[59]—except the work being play, and the play being the gamble for the sustenance that makes the work possible in the first place. Both Melgard and Keller, then, employ an internal—institutional—critique of the seemingly liberating potential of POD; in the economy of the digital, the position of the writer is as precarious as ever, and just as dependent on access to the means of production.

These are only two of the elements post-digital literature employs in its strategy of self-disclosure, and I certainly do not mean to suggest that there aren't more, nor that this disclosure is the only function it serves. However, I believe that much of post-digital literature's relevance today derives from its unique capacity to articulate the process of digital technization—be it in its technological, epistemological, or socioeconomic form. Because of this, it is an exceptionally contemporary, or *actuel,* type of practice. None of the platforms I have discussed are older than six years, and it is anything but certain that they will exist six years from now—in their current form, unlikelier still. But this is a strength, not a weakness: as post-digital literature uncovers a temporality and a concept of reality that are very much our own, its works bind themselves to the moment of their production and dissemination, and can *show* us more about the epochal threshold we live in than any writing that merely *says.*

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57 Holly Melgard, *Reimbur$ement* (Troll Thread, 2015), 4.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.

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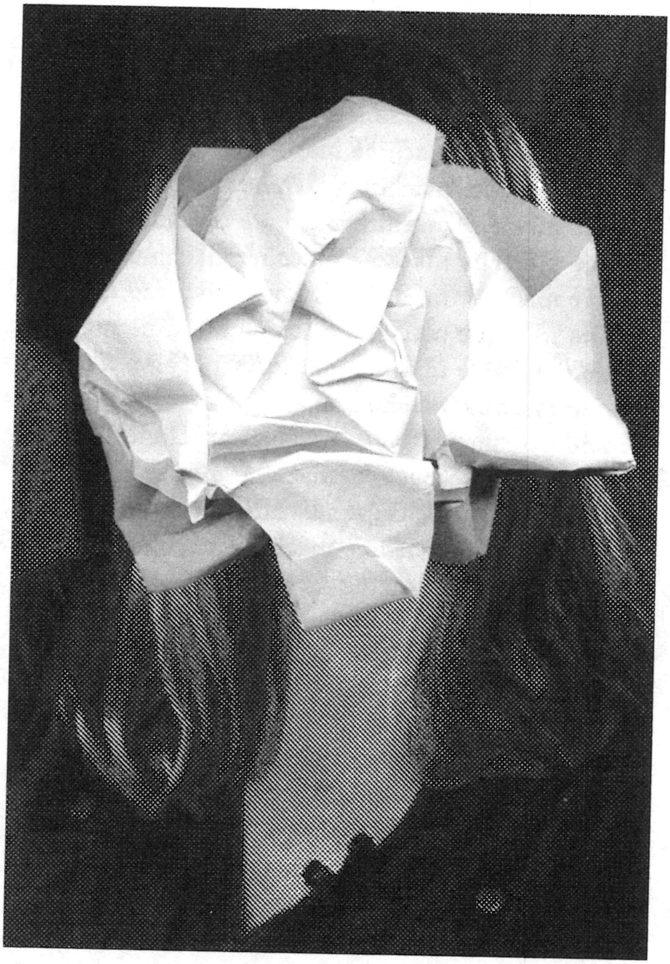
Publisher, Promoter, and Genius: The Rise of Curatorial Ethos in Contemporary Literature



Hanna Kuusela

Publisher, Promoter, and Genius: The Rise of Curatorial Ethos in Contemporary Literature

Hanna Kuusela

The rise of curators has been a central theme in the context of visual culture since the mid-twentieth century. The 2007 Lyon Biennale saw perhaps the climax of this development: instead of inviting artists to the biennale, the curators Hans Ulrich Obrist and Stéphanie Moisdon invited roughly fifty other curators to construct the biennale. Lyon is but one example: at the 2013 Venice Biennale, the Finnish delegation included three curators in contrast to two artists. Gradually but steadily, curators have occupied a central role in the contemporary art scene, a role that sometimes simply outweighs that of the artists.

This rise of curators is usually discussed in the context of visual art, performance art, and art that is exhibited in public. Something similar has, however, also taken place in literature and publishing. This article describes and analyzes the emergence of curatorial practices in the field of literature and publishing, or the rise of what could be called the literary curator.

By literary curator, this article refers to actors who practice or fulfill curatorial functions in the literary field. In short, *literary curators are actors who mainly mediate, distribute, (re)present, publish, or exhibit in new contexts texts that have been produced by people other than themselves and who thereby create literary phenomena in the public.* A literary curator takes over and fulfills many of the functions and tasks of the traditional publisher or editor in selecting, distributing, and promoting texts. In so doing, s/he puts weight on the act and moment of publishing, of making a text public, and highlights its constitutive role in the production of meanings. In this sense, literary curators are both producers and mediators of meanings. Different mediators have always existed in the field of literature, as M. Thomas Inge reminds us,[1] but what is new is the visibility of these mediators. What differentiates literary curators from traditional publishers and other institutionalized gatekeepers, such as editors and agents, is that through their mediations literary curators not only create new phenomena, but also construct their own artistic and public identities, and they may even *substitute the figure of the author with the figure represented by themselves.* Unlike traditional publishers and editors, these figures not only make public others' texts but also seek publicity for their *own* practices, and thus accumulate and create cultural capital for themselves. Through her/his practice, the literary curator challenges the traditional figure of the author as the originating subject of the text, but is, nevertheless, capable of promoting her/his own creative individuality. Consequently, the literary curator is a postmodern, or poststructuralist figure that manages to combine the promotional or marketing needs of today's literary field with the theoretical critique of the author. As such, literary curators can be interpreted in the context of promotional culture[2] and attention economy,[3] or as their symptom.

Although the literary curator is introduced here, for the sake of clarity, as an emerging cultural figure, the term

[1] M. Thomas Inge, "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship," *PMLA* 116, no. 3 (2001): 623–630.

[2] See Andrew Wernick, *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression* (London: SAGE, 1991) and Aeron Davis, *Promotional Cultures: The Rise and Spread of Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing and Branding* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

[3] See Michael H. Goldhaber, "The Attention Economy and the Net," *First Monday* 2, no. 4 (1997), accessed March 20, 2015, http://firstmonday.org/article/view/519/440 and Georg Franck, "The Economy of Attention," *Telepolis* 7 (1999), accessed March 20, 2015, http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/5/5567/1.html.

should not necessarily be understood as referring to a fixed and essentialized identity. As aesthetic identities are constantly in the process of (re)formation, the term can also be perceived as referring to a dimension of action, a perspective, or a function that is occasionally fulfilled and practiced by an artist or a writer. It is difficult to name actors who would *only* be literary curators, but it is increasingly easy to find moments in which writers act as literary curators, practice literary curating or fulfill curatorial functions. From this perspective, the term can also be taken as describing an attitude or a set of techniques that an actor may put into practice in some projects and not in others.

The Emergence of Curators and the Erosion of Authorship in Arts and Literature

Originally curators were people who took care of museum collections and the organization of exhibitions, and the profession developed simultaneously with the institutionalization of museums. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the profession began to gain new visibility and new responsibilities. This redefinition of the curator's role was partly motivated by an urge to bring more transparency to exhibition practices,[4] but behind this rise of the curators was a larger discourse that questioned the autonomy of the artist and the artwork. This discursive change had its background in the redefinitions of the aesthetic that had characterized the work of the historical avant-garde, Conceptual art, and finally postmodern theories.[5]

These large shifts in the artistic field have been explained by the shift from modernism to postmodernism and beyond, characterized by the (feeling of) loss of originality and invention. Helmut Draxler has described the growing sensation that "since the 1960s it has become almost impossible to maintain the high standards of originality and innovation typical of the modern period."[6] This feeling was both articulated and strengthened in the postmodern theories that celebrated pastiches, artistic recycling, and simulations instead of original production and originality.[7] Consequently, the critical and analytical focus started to shift from the artist and the artwork to different mediators and institutions as producers of art and artistic meaning.[8]

The rise of the new curator took place in this conjuncture in which the autonomy of the artist and the artwork had experienced theoretical and practical erosion. Curators began to fill the void. This meant that curators established themselves as mediators whose job was to structure the experiences of the audiences. As Paul O'Neill writes, "curatorship emerged as a creative, semiautonomous, and individually

[4] Nathalie Heinich and Michael Pollak, "From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur: Inventing a Singular Position," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 237.

[5] See Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 9 and Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[6] Helmut Draxler, "Crisis as Form. Curating and the Logic of Mediation," *Oncurating.org* 13 (2012), 5-7, 5.

[7] See Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 21 and Sanna Nyqvist, *Double-Edged Imitation: Theories and Practices of Pastiche in Literature* (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2010).

[8] See also Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008).

authored form of mediation (and production), which structured the experience of the work of art and affected the ways in which art was made and communicated to an audience."[9]

Gradually, the importance and the visibility of curators grew, and by the end of the 1980s, "the verb 'to curate' began to articulate 'curating' as a mode of proactive participation in the processes of artistic production."[10] According to O'Neill, this "trend continued into the 1990s, during what Michael Brenson has called the 'curator's moment' when certain individual curators achieved an unprecedented hypervisibility."[11] Finally, some commentators have gone as far as suggesting that curating is about to substitute the artistic practice entirely. Draxler has noted that curatorial "modes of production have become so interesting for many artists that curating [...] seems to have become the actual mode of artistic expression."[12]

The theoretical development in literary criticism has in many ways followed a similar path. The sense of loss of the high standards of originality after modernism also characterized the major theoretical debates of twentieth century literature. Theories of textuality and intertextuality can be interpreted as responses to the growing sense that "all this has been seen/read before." The deconstruction of the author figure has been a commonplace framework in literary studies ever since the writings of Michel Foucault and later Roland Barthes. Together with Walter Benjamin's earlier writings,[13] Barthes and Foucault challenged the autonomous and bourgeois author constructed by literary history.[14] Barthes suggested that the author should be abolished in the name of the text as a productivity, and as a recycling place of signs;[15] whereas, Foucault concentrated on describing the "space left empty by the author's disappearance."[16]

However, this theoretical deconstruction of the autonomous author does not mean that the author as an organizing principle or a function would have disappeared. On the contrary, as Foucault's writings on the author's function already suggest, the theoretical relativization of the author as an originating subject has been accompanied by a growing interest in the public appearances and the public role of authors. Authors as promotional figures are at the center of literary marketing, perhaps more than ever,[17] even to the extent that one can refer to the ubiquity of writers.[18] Author figures are so central to the literary market that authors appear on the front covers of their books, and their names are written in specific fonts as if they were brands or logos. These practices that used to characterize only serial writing have also become commonplace in so-called high and middlebrow literature.

These two trends, the theoretical erosion of the author and the ubiquity of the author as a marketing tool, might at

[9] O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating*, 4.

[10] Ibid., 5.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Draxler, "Crisis as Form," 5.

[13] See Walter Benjamin, "The Author as a Producer," *New Left Review* 62 (1970), 83–96.

[14] See Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–148, Michel Foucault, "Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books 1991), 101–120.

[15] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Poststructuralist Criticism*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Stephen Heath (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), 73–81.

[16] Foucault, "What is an Author?" 105.

[17] See Joe Moran, *Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America* (London: Pluto Press, 2000) and Claire Squires, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[18] See Moran, *Star Authors*.

first appear contradictory or mutually exclusive. However, as will be argued in the following, the figure of the literary curator seems to be at ease with both these trends. This emerging figure obviously witnesses the disappearance, or the erosion of, the autonomous author as the originating subject of the literary text. But simultaneously, this figure of the literary curator is deeply rooted in contemporary promotional needs and the pressure to promote literature through individuals. The literary curator can be interpreted as a response to this ambiguous situation in which the author has been theoretically demystified at the same time that (as a brand) s/he is perhaps needed more than ever.

Curatorial Practices in Contemporary Literature

The emergence of curatorial ethos in literature can be seen most clearly in two contemporary practices. First, in many literary appropriations in which the curator-like actor works on material produced by others, and second, in different projects of literary crowdsourcing, in which the curatorial figure invites others to join a literary or publishing project initiated by her/him.

Just as in the visual arts, the roots of literary curators are in many ways in the aforementioned debates around Conceptual and avant-garde art that relativized the role of the individual artist. One nodal point in this process of relativization was the work of Appropriation artists. In the past decades, such appropriative practices have also become increasingly influential in literature. In line with the tradition of Appropriation art (in visual culture), literary appropriationists re-publish, collect, and assemble texts or fragments written by others.[19]

This article suggests that different appropriative forms of collage writing, the genres of found poetry and search engine poetry, flarf and erasure poetry, as well as reprints,[20] can all be thought of as including a curatorial dimension. The users of such practices collect, select, and re-publish material produced by others, giving it a new context, and in most cases, also a new form and new meanings, thus, fulfilling curatorial functions. This does not mean that all textual appropriators would essentially *be* literary curators, but rather that their praxis often includes curatorial dimensions or carries a curatorial ethos. Examples of such writing are numerous, but include, for instance, such well-known works as Joseph Kosuth's *Purloined* (2000), Cory Arcangel's *Working on my Novel* (2014), Sally Alatalo's *A Rearranged Affair* (1996), Kajsa Dahlberg's *A Room of One's Own/A Thousand Libraries* (2006) and *Newspaper Blackout* by Austin Kleon (2010).[21]

Different theoretical concepts have attempted to capture the essence of this kind of writing and publishing, or describe the figure emerging from such creative modes of reproduction. Nick Thurston writes about reproduction-as-production,[22] and Kenneth Goldsmith has used the widely proliferated term "uncreative writing."[23] Antoine Lefebvre has discussed readymade activities among writers and written on the artist publisher or artiste entrepreneur.[24] Marjorie Perloff has named the figure that produces such texts the "unoriginal genius,"[25] a term that will be discussed further at the end of this article. The different methods for such appropriative writing and publishing practice include recycling, managing, citing, distributing, explaining, and copying previously existing texts under the name of a new artist-like figure. The words come close to those used by O'Neill, according to whom key concepts that describe the process of curating are electing, organizing, mediating, promoting, and arranging.[26] The figure arising from such practices could also be called the editor, as appropriationists edit and modify other people's texts. The word curator, however, emphasizes how the emerging figure is not only someone who selects and distributes texts, but also explains their meanings and in so doing constructs of, or for, himself a new artist-like identity or a public persona, which exceeds the relative invisibility or even humbleness of the editor.

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[19] See Annette Gilbert, *Wiederaufgelegt: Zur Appropriation von Texten und Büchern in Büchern* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2012) and Annette Gilbert, *Reprint: Appropriation (&) Literature* (Wiesbaden: Luxbooks 2014).

[20] Gilbert, *Wiederaufgelegt*, 15 and Gilbert, *Reprint*, 49.

[21] Joseph Kosuth, *Purloined: A Novel* (Cologne: Salon Verlag, 2000); Cory Arcangel, *Working On My Novel* (London: Penguin, 2014); Anita M-28 [Sally Alatalo], *A Rearranged Affair* (Chicago: Sara Ranchouse Publishing, 1996); Kajsa Dahlberg, *A Room of One's Own/A Thousand Libraries* (self-published, 2006); Austin Kleon, *Newspaper Blackout* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).

Along with the appropriative writing strategies summarized above, another type of literary curating is comprised of projects in which people are asked to participate, often in the form of sending fragments of texts to the literary curator. Different wikinovels, crowdsourced novels, hypertext novels, and networked novels invite writers to contribute to a story initiated by an individual. Equally, many textual works that include performative elements rest on participation. Recent examples are again numerous, but include, for example, Barbara Campbell's performance *1001 Nights Cast* (2005–2008), Goldsmith's *Printing out the Internet* (2013–2014), *Google Poetics* (2012–) initiated by Sampsa Nuotio and Raisa Omaheimo, *Flight Paths* (2007–) launched by Kate Pullinger and Chris Joseph, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* (2014) by Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger, Rachel Zolf's *The Tolerance Project* (2009–2011) and *Collabowriters* (2012) by Willy Chyr.[27] All these projects have invited others to join, but been initiated by (an) individual figure(s) who fulfill(s) curatorial functions. In the case of *Google Poetics,* a project that presents Google's autocomplete suggestions as poems, the initiators even call themselves curators.[28]

These contemporary, often digitally realized, examples follow in the footsteps of some early works of Conceptual art, such as Mel Bochner's *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art* (1966) and Seth Siegelaub's *XEROX book* (1968).[29] In both projects, the artist or curator invited others to contribute to a publication that was then published or exhibited under the name of the inviter and (at least later) understood as belonging to his career or artistic oeuvre. In these projects, Bochner and Siegelaub exercised both the functions of curators and publishers, similar to many contemporary actors discussed here. Both works have been exhibited or archived in galleries and museums, which has blurred the boundaries between visual art institutions and publishing or printing.

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[22] Nick Thurston, "Publishing as a Praxis of Conceptualist Reading Performances," *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice* 6, no. 3 (2013): 421–429, 423.

[23] See Kenneth Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[24] Antoine Lefebvre, *Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur, L'édition comme pratique artistique alternative* (PhD diss., Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, 2014), online available at http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis.

[25] Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

[26] O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating*, 4.

[27] Barbara Campbell, *1001 Nights Cast* (2005–2008), http://1001.net.au/; Kenneth Goldsmith, *Printing out the Internet* (2013–2014), http://printingtheinternet.tumblr.com/; Sampsa Nuotio and Raisa Omaheimo, *Google Poetics* (2012–), http://www.googlepoetics.com/; Kate Pullinger, Chris Joseph and Participants, *Flight Paths: A Networked Novel* (2007–), http://flightpaths.net/; Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* (2014), http://www.1418now.org.uk/letter/; Rachel Zolf, *The Tolerance Project: A MFA* (2009–2011), http://thetoleranceproject.blogspot.de/; Willy Chyr, *Collabowriters* (2012), http://www.thecollabowriters.com/.

[28] See Nuotio and Omaheimo, *Google Poetics*.

Often such projects of literary "crowdsourcing" do not involve a traditional publisher, or when they do, the publisher does not take an active role in promotion. In most cases, the initiators of crowdsourced experiments not only distribute the calls to participate, but also give interviews, motivate the praxis, and offer meanings to the crowdsourced acts. Thus, by promoting the project in the public sphere, these literary curators act as substitutes not only for the (traditional figure of the) artist but also that of the publisher.

Both literary appropriations and literary crowdsourcing reflect in literature the emergence, or the institutionalization, of what Dorothea von Hantelmann has in visual arts called the curatorial paradigm,[30] the current situation in which the act of selection has replaced that of production. She writes about the transition from a production-oriented society to a selection-oriented society, originally marked by the "invention" of the readymade.[31] Accordingly, one of the central practices through which (both the visual and the literary) curator operates is the act of choosing. Ever since Marcel Duchamp's readymade aesthetics, the act of choosing has been considered as structuring, if not constituting, the aesthetic experience, not least because Duchamp himself stressed the importance of the choice in a text he wrote in the aftermath of trying to exhibit the urinal.[32] It can even be said that the readymade constituted the need for curatorial practice. Elena Filipovic has suggested that Duchamp's *Fountain,* so to say, first came into being through its "documentation, administration, and (delayed) representation in an exhibition (which is to say, its *curation*)." In short, the "'invention' of the readymade needed to be *curated.*"[33] Similarly, according to von Hantelmann, the changed status of the curator is tied to the idea that "the actual moment of the production of meaning lies in the exhibition (and not, or at least not primarily, in the artwork)," which then implies "that the actual *producer* of meaning is the curator."[34] When this ethos is applied to literature, it is the act of publishing, of making a text public that produces the meanings. Hence, the literary curator becomes the actual producer of meanings.

O'Neill has discussed this growing importance of the exhibition as the actual space in which meanings are made. According to O'Neill, the new type of curating that emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century implied a rise of thematically arranged exhibitions in contrast to exhibitions organized chronologically.[35] At that point, curatorial production started to consist of "the grouping together of related artworks and artists perceived as having similar concerns, which led to the exhibition form being treated as a medium in and of itself."[36]

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[29] Mel Bochner, *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art*, four looseleaf notebooks (New York: Visual Arts Gallery, School of Visual Arts, 1966); Seth Siegelaub and John W. Wendler, eds., *Xerox Book* (New York: self-published, 1968).

[30] See Dorothea von Hantelmann, "The Curatorial Paradigm," *The Exhibitionist* 4 (2011): 6–12.

[31] Ibid., 11.

[32] See Anonymous, "The Richard Mutt Case," in *The Blind Man* 2 (1917) (Written by Beatrice Wood, H. P. Roché and/or Marcel Duchamp).

[33] Elena Filipovic, "When Exhibitions Become Form: On the History of the Artist as Curator," *Mousse* 41, no. 0 (2013): 3–20, 9, emphasis in original.

[34] von Hantelmann, "Curatorial Paradigm," 8.

In literature, this new curatorial attitude toward the act of exhibiting can be seen in the archiving boom. The increasing popularity of the creative archiving of literary practices can be interpreted as a form of literary curating. Goldsmith with his Ubuweb, Paul Soulellis's Library of the Printed Web, and Lefebvre's La Bibliothèque Fantastique all nurture an attitude reminiscent of that of curating. By bringing together texts that share a certain family resemblance with each other, these literary curators as publishers or archivists create new artistic or literary phenomena in the same way as curators who group together artists perceived as having similar concerns.

Such thematically arranged exhibitions, publications or archives, as well as appropriative and crowdsourced practices more generally, are often accompanied by explanatory discourses that help to contextualize and understand the literary curators' acts. If Filipovic suggests that the emergence, or the invention, of readymade art necessitated curating,[37] the same can be said of many contemporary literary phenomena, such as found poetry or erasure poetry. Their birth (as literature) necessitated and still necessitates literary curators, in order for them to be understood as poetry. Hence, curating not only means the act of choosing the material but also its explanation and representation so that it becomes understood as literature. For example, re-typed works, such as Simon Morris's *Getting Inside Jack Kerouac's Head* (2010), or Goldsmith's *Day* (2003), as well as the appropriations of entire texts, such as Richard Prince's *Catcher in the Rye* (2011),[38] necessitate curating in order to be understood as new works, or as literature, in the first place. Equally, explanatory discourse is often used in crowdsourced writing projects. Most of these crowdsourced projects include some metatexts that explain the background, the relevance and the methods of the project because the coming together of the writing community necessitates this.

The production of these explanatory discourses has traditionally been the task of the critic or the curator. In this sense, curatorial practice has been, among other things, a discursive act through which meanings are attached to works of art, and through which new artistic phenomena are not only discovered, but also invented. According to von Hantelmann, curators are professionals not only in the field of choosing, but also experts in making these choices meaningful.[39] Hence, curating not only refers to reliance on already existing material and its selective reuse or exhibition or publishing, but also includes explaining the emerging result to its audiences. Now, it can be said that this attitude has spread across artistic practices. When artists have become curators, and curators artists (both in visual art and literature), the boundaries between those who explain and those who produce the works that are being explained has become increasingly blurred, and the curatorial ethos has started to characterize a broad spectrum of artistic practices. Such explanatory paratexts, which are widely used in Conceptual art and Conceptual writing, are sometimes even presented as ethical obligations for writers. For example, Jan Baetens writes, referring to constraint writing, but the same idea can be applied to appropriative writing, that: "by *concealing* the constraints, the author of the text prevents the reader from becoming able to take his place; by *revealing* them, he agrees to share his knowledge of the text and makes it possible for the reader to become a writer, too."[40] Juri Joensuu attaches such explanatory discourses to the demystification of the romantic author, and suggests that by revealing one's writing methods, the writer breaks the boundaries between the artist and the audience, between art and life, and challenges the ideals of authenticity and immediacy as the founding values of literature.[41] For Annette Gilbert, such explanatory acts are also what differentiate Appropriation literature from plagiarism. According to her, a "strategic appropriation must be accompanied by a clear, indeed, demonstrative identification and public staging of the act itself. This self-referential declaration distinguishes appropriation from plagiarism and counterfeiting."[42]

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[35] O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating*, 13.

[36] Ibid., 16.

[37] See Filipovic, "When Exhibitions Become Form."

[38] Simon Morris, *Getting Inside Jack Kerouac's Head* (York: Information as Material, 2010); Kenneth Goldsmith, *Day* (Great Barrington, MA: The Figures, 2003); Richard Prince, *Catcher in the Rye* (New York: AP. American Place, 2011).

[39] von Hantelmann, "Curatorial Paradigm," 10.

From Geniuses to Promoters

What characterizes all the practices discussed above is a dependence on other people's texts and a simultaneous construction of a new authorial figure reminiscent of the artist. In this context, the literary curator emerges as a figure that constitutes her/himself through aesthetic choices.[43] Thus, it is perhaps no surprise that when this article was being drafted in November 2014, Goldsmith suggested on his Twitter account that "Writers are becoming curators of language, a move similar to the emergence of the curator as artist in the visual arts."[44]

As noted above, Marjorie Perloff has discussed such a figure in her influential book *Unoriginal Genius*. According to Perloff, an "unoriginal genius" is interested in the question of "What can be done with other people's work?" Perloff writes that "*Inventio* is giving way to appropriation [...] and reliance on intertextuality. Thus we are witnessing a new poetry, more conceptual than directly expressive."[45]

The figure discussed by Perloff under the term unoriginal genius captures several interesting features discussed in this article. The reason for introducing a new term, that of the literary curator, however, lies in the attempt to interpret this figure inside a larger socio-political and economic conjuncture. The unoriginal genius is above all a figure of the literary

[40] Jan Baetens, "Free Writing, Constrained Writing: The Ideology of Form," *Poetics Today* 18, no. 1 (1997): 1–14, 8, emphasis in original.

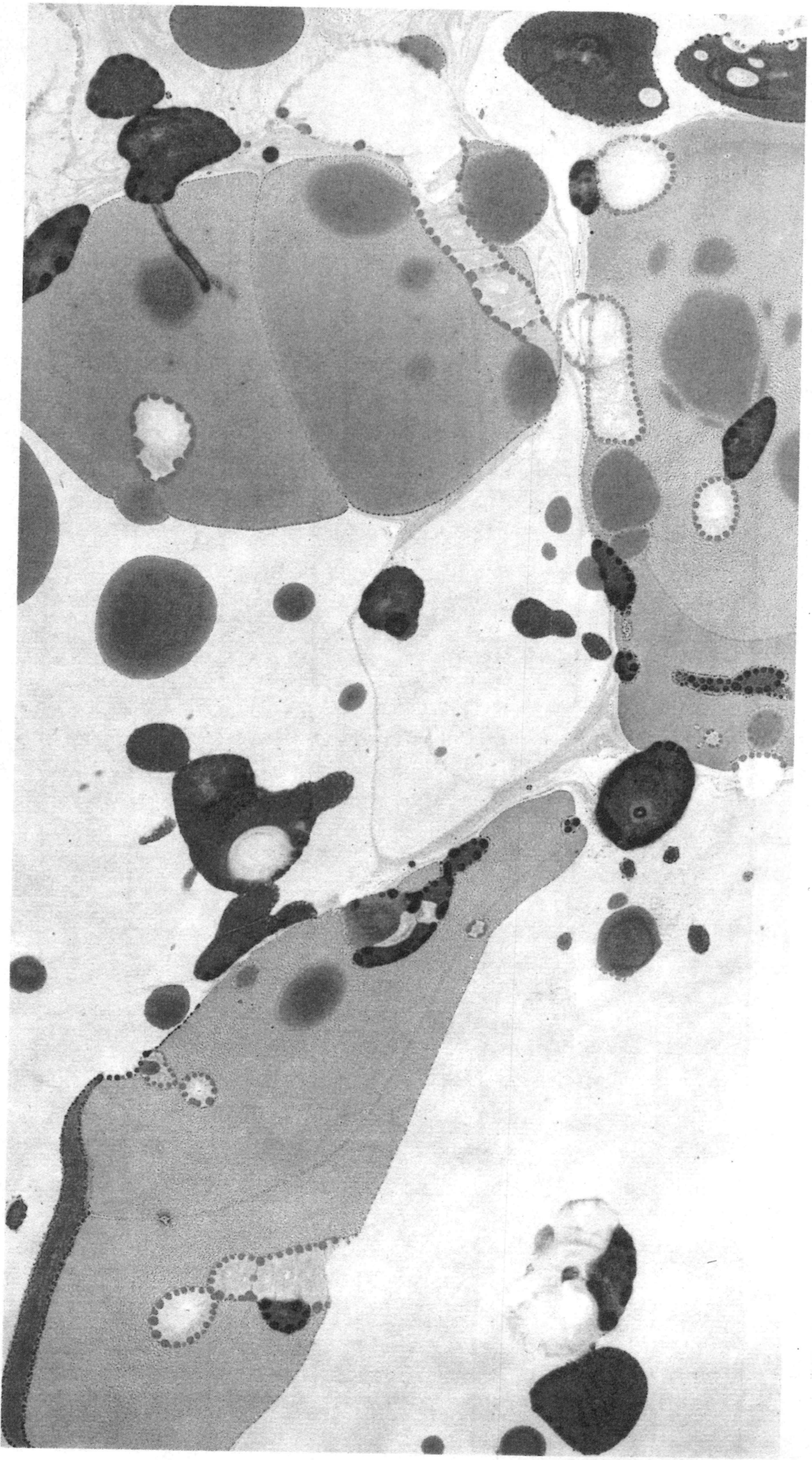
[41] Juri Joensuu, *Menetelmät, kokeet, koneet. Proseduraalisuus poetiikassa, kirjallisuushistoriassa ja suomalaisessa kokeellisessa kirjallisuudessa* (Helsinki: Poesia, 2012), 252–253.

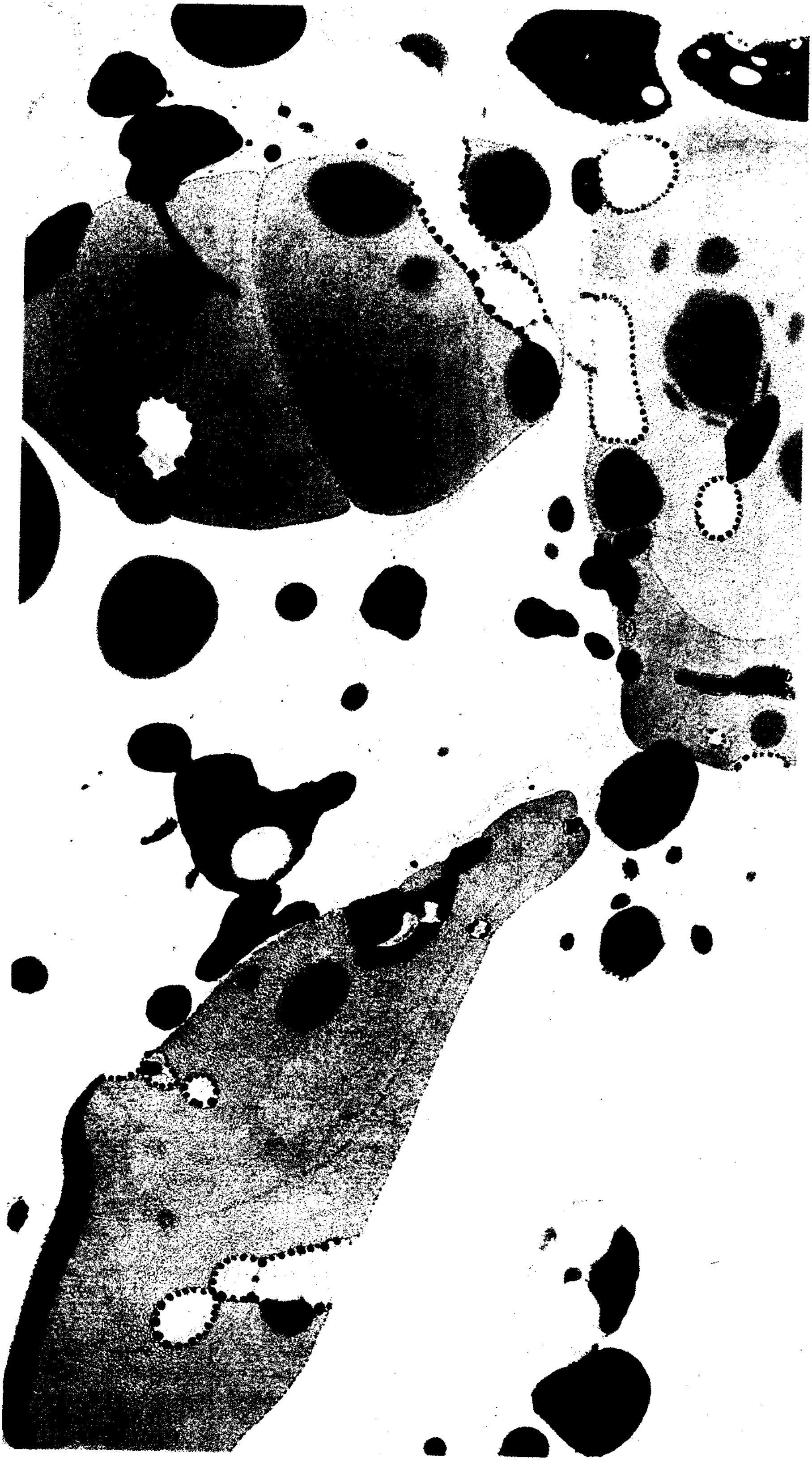
[42] Gilbert, *Reprint*, 51.

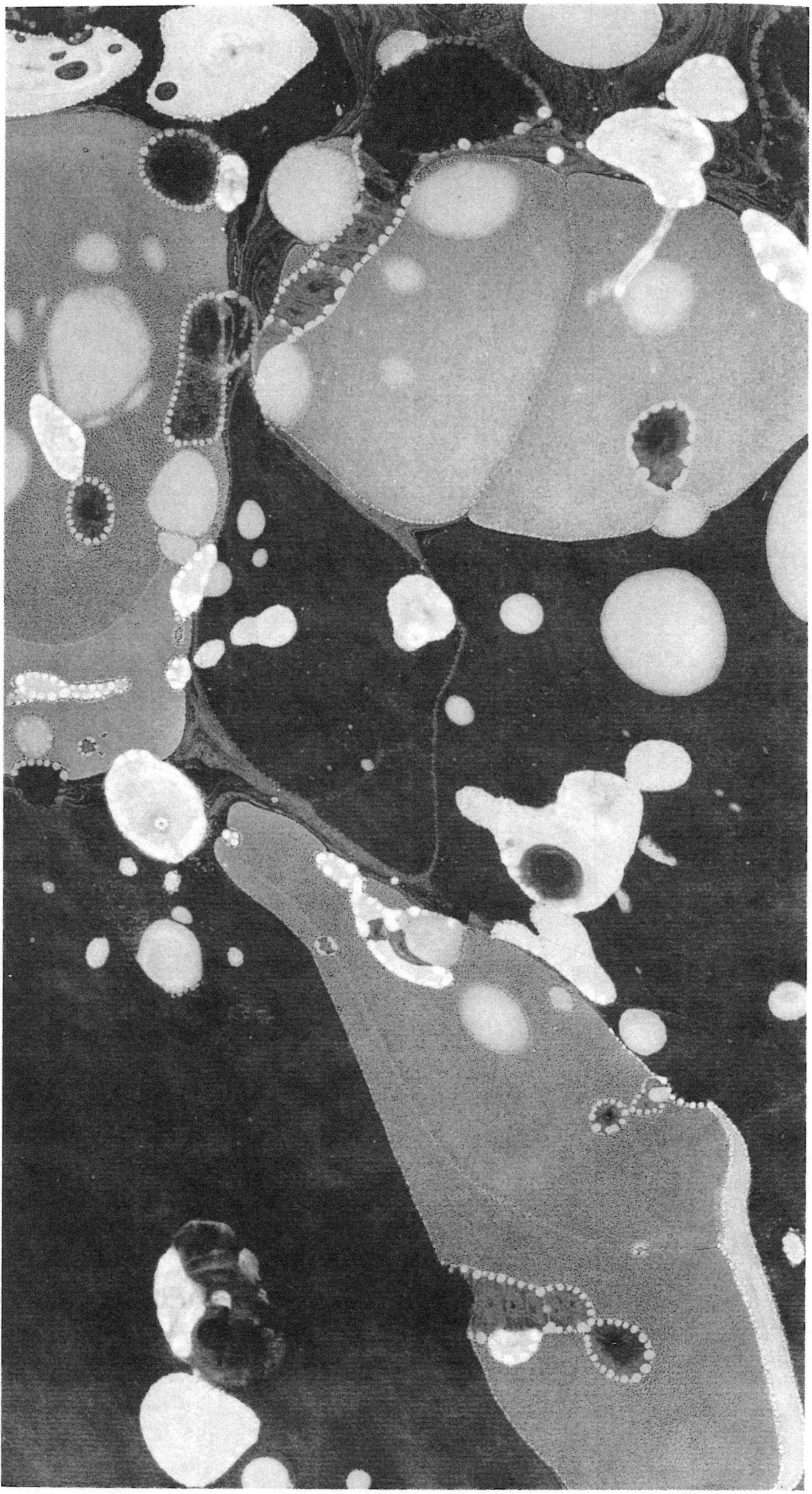
[43] von Hantelmann, "Curatorial Paradigm," 10.

[44] Kenneth Goldsmith, Twitter account *@kg_ubu*, November 4, 2014. Republished in Goldsmith, *Theory* (Paris: Jean Boîte, 2015).

[45] Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius*, 11.







field, emerging from literary history; whereas, the term literary curator attempts to interpret this literary figure as part of a larger social development. Similarly to von Hantelmann, this article perceives art and literature as fields in which basic characteristics of a socioeconomic order are reflected, manifested and challenged. By introducing the term literary curator, the current article emphasizes how this figure is often—or increasingly so—perhaps closer to a promoter than a genius. Andrew Wernick has used the term "promotional culture" to describe the current state of Western societies in which "the range of cultural phenomena which, at least as one of their functions, serve to communicate a promotional message has become, today, virtually co-extensive with our produced symbolic world."[46] Accordingly, promotion has emerged as the lingua franca of social, economic and cultural life.[47] Under promotional culture, "capitalist forms of exchange [come] to dominate all other forms of exchange," and "a widening range of cultural phenomena" have the primary function of communicating a promotional message.[48] This increased need for promotion can be traced back to the current situation often referred to as the attention economy. According to the theorists of the attention economy, the post-digital economy revolves primarily around paying, receiving and seeking attention, which is a limited and scarce resource.[49] Promotion is an essential practice in this economy and a survival strategy in a culture that suffers from an "ongoing crisis of attentiveness,"[50] caused by the abundance of information, sources of stimulation and new products that continually push our attention to new limits. This article has attempted to describe this development, or its possible symptoms and future risks, in the context of literature, which is one central category of our "produced symbolic world."[51]

The term literary curator encourages us to ask to what extent writers, or actors, that fulfill curatorial functions in literature reflect and exemplify certain hegemonic cultural forms, characterized by promotion and attention seeking. According to von Hantelmann, the rise and expansion of curatorial practices is deeply rooted in the "present socio-economic order of Western societies," which is characterized by a "new culture of choosing."[52] For von Hantelmann, the new importance of selection in art, and more generally in our culture, "is essentially connected to profound transformations of Western societies in the second half of the 20th century,"[53] when we have witnessed a transition from societies of scarcity to those of affluence. It is only in this context that we can understand the figure of the curator in all its complexity and social, political and economic relevance, von Hantelmann argues. Accordingly, the focus on the curator across artistic fields does not "appear to be a coincidental phenomenon."[54]

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[46] Wernick, *Promotional Culture*, 182.

[47] See ibid. and Devon Powers, "Notes on Hype," *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012): 857–873.

[48] Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, "Blowing up the brand," in *Blowing up the brand: Critical perspectives on promotional culture*, ed. Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers (New York: Peter Lang Press, 2010), 1–26, 4.

[49] See Tizian Terranova, "Attention, Economy and the Brain," *Culture Machine* 13, no. 0 (2012), http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/465, Michael Goldhaber, "The Attention Economy and the Net," and Georg Franck, "The Economy of Attention."

[50] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

[51] Ibid.

[52] von Hantelmann, "Curatorial Paradigm," 3, 8.

[53] Ibid., 8–9.

[54] Ibid., 11.

Von Hantelmann refers to sociologist Gerhard Schulze, who has described the transition from a society of scarcity to one of affluence.[55] With increased income and leisure time, people can (and need to) shape their lives according to their own preferences, through their own choices. Our living situation constantly forces us to make distinctions, and more than ever before, people perceive their existence as something that can and must be created and shaped. In every aspect of our lives, we experience increased possibilities that force us to make decisions.

In such a selection-oriented society, the producers are replaceable and they can easily be outsourced, because it is the chooser who is important, not the producer. Nick Thurston has brilliantly elaborated on this replaceability of the producer in the field of literature, and tested the socio-economic boundaries of literary curating in *Of the Subcontract,*[56] in which he outsourced the writing of the poems to the workers of Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Literary outsourcing has also been used in other conceptual works and publishing projects, but Thurston has made the socio-economic dimensions of such outsourcing a central theme of the book. By attaching to each poem the price he paid for the writers, he made visible the cost of the book's textual production. This act demonstrates how the relationship between the (multiple) producers of the text and the (individual) literary curator can be structured when taken to the extreme. The book shows how in the attention economy, the relationship between those who produce and those who extract (cultural and/or economic) value out of the production is constantly on the verge of becoming exploitative in the most traditional sense. The book makes the dynamics of this relationship painfully transparent, but in so doing, it remains more of a symptom than a solution of the larger social changes, as Darren Wershler writes in his afterword to the book.[57] According to Wershler, we use data to represent these social changes to ourselves, but the meanings we extract from the data "enforce and accelerate those changes."[58] He continues, "[p]oets and professors can point to this change, but so far, have not been able to move beyond it. As we are beginning to realize, our tasks, too, can be outsourced."[59] This observation applies to most examples of literary curating: rather than solving the question of meaning and of authorial hierarchies in the world of textual abundance, they appear as discerning and sensitive symptoms of the existing situation. Moreover, by abandoning the belief in the autonomy of the creative subjects, in this case the Author with a capital A, they run the risk of offering themselves and their own (or ourselves and our own) tasks for outsourcing. As von Hantelmann has noted, the old type "artist/productive individual, generates subjectivity through production," whereas "the curator/selecting individual, generates subjectivity through consumption" and reproduction.[60] This leaves the latter more vulnerable to being used for purely promotional ends.

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[55] See Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft* (Frankfurt, New York: Campus Verlag, 1992).

[56] Nick Thurston, *Of the Subcontract. Or, Principles of Poetic Right* (York: Information as Material, 2013).

[57] Darren Wershler, "Afterword: Title of Essay in Plain Type," in Nick Thurston, *Of the Subcontract. Or, Principles of Poetic Right* (York: Information as Material, 2013), 133–141, 139.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] von Hantelmann, "Curatorial Paradigm," 11.

Authors are working increasingly under pressure to promote their own work, even if at the same time a certain theological trust in the artist as the source of original discourse has been lost. What emerges from this conjuncture is a new figure, that of the literary curator, who manages to preserve her/his artistic individuality—which is so important for the media industry—at the same time as the practice itself deconstructs, in principle, this very idea of artistic selfhood. For instance, Goldsmith writes about postidentity literature,[61] but simultaneously has managed to construct a fixed public identity for himself, one that overshadows the multiple identities of the producers. This can be seen, for example, in *Printing out the Internet,* in which over 20,000 people around the world participated, but which was described in the press as Goldsmith's project, with such titles as: "Why is Kenneth Goldsmith Printing the Whole Internet?,"[62] "Artist Kenneth Goldsmith Attempting to 'Print the Internet,'"[63] and "Artist Kenneth Goldsmith Wants To Print The Entire Internet."[64] Thus, perhaps the word "postidentity" used by Goldsmith refers to those producers who carry out the outsourced work rather than to himself.

Consequently, the deconstructed, demystified and outsourced author or artist seems to make a return in the form of a new artistic figure or identity. The resulting figure is an expert in assembling and organizing material produced by others while still managing to promote the end result as something associated almost entirely with the individual (person or company) who does the organizing. Moreover, the practice, characterized by this ambiguous double bind, is often accompanied by explanatory discourse that prepares the audiences and critics for the experience in such a way that the meanings lie more in the surrounding discourses than in the artworks. As experts in several promotional practices, these figures can be named curators, who, according to Brenson, "must be at once aestheticians, diplomats, economists, critics, historians, politicians, audience developers, and promoters."[65] The same list characterizes the literary curators who not only create and publish texts but also develop or educate their audiences and readers, and promote, present or explain the works in the historical context of literature and art, thus also replacing literary and art critics.

Interpreting the Consequences

How should we interpret the works that arise from such practices, or how should we perceive the possible consequences and effects of literary curating? It appears that such curated texts can be, and have been, approached at least from two different perspectives. The first perspective stresses the unstabilizing effects of the practice, and the anti-essential openness of the results. For example, Thurston suggests that forms of writing that rest on the reproduction-as-production model, and especially on self-publishing, create writing that has an unstable object status, mainly because this kind of writing lacks a stable signator, the Author, and is often published in digital form, characterized by fluidity.[66] Similarly, Scott Lash has noted that the turn of the millennium has witnessed an outsourcing of the *author* function onto teams of co-workers. As a result, "art becomes no longer a question of deep meaning and extended duration, but instead of operationality and brief duration. In this sense, now art becomes communication."[67] Communicativity and instability also characterize the discourse of Goldsmith, according to whom one's writing should adopt voices, positions and opinions that are not "mine," because with "digital fragmentation, any sense of unified authenticity and coherence has long been shelved."[68] Finally, the resulting figure can be described with the vocabulary of instability as a writer of postidentity literature.[69]

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[61] Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*, 11, 85.

[62] Marina Galperina, "Why is Kenneth Goldsmith Printing the Whole Internet?," *Animal*, May 30, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, http://animalnewyork.com/2013/why-is-kenneth-goldsmith-printing-the-whole-internet/.

[63] Heather Manes, "Artist Kenneth Goldsmith Attempting to 'Print the Internet,'" *Opposing Views*, May 31, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.opposingviews.com/i/celebrities/artist-kenneth-goldsmith-attempting-print-internet/.

[64] "Artist Kenneth Goldsmith Wants To Print The Entire Internet," *The Huffington Post*, June 3, 2013, accessed August 15, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/03/print-the-internet_n_3367206.html.

[65] Michael Brenson, "The Curator's Moment," *Art Journal* 57, no. 4 (1998), 16–27.

The other perspective, perhaps more critical than that outlined above, suggests that the praxis of curating is also, or above all, an act of reterritorialization, i.e., an act of designing a new power. Many moments of literary curating are not only acts of deterritorialization, in the sense of unstabilizing the source texts, but also acts of reterritorialization, to use Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concepts.[70] The act of making a text public through reproduction and publishing, and attaching it to the name of the appropriating or crowdsourcing actor, in other words to the literary curator, not only detaches the text from its original context and thus, multiplies the number of possible meanings, but also constitutes a new order and a new context through which meanings are again stabilized. This is done particularly strongly through explanatory paratexts. To take, once again, the example of Goldsmith, who states, "far be it for conceptual writers to dictate the moral or political meanings of [appropriated] words that aren't theirs."[71] But still, in his own practice, he attaches the appropriated sheets used in *Printing out the Internet* to Aaron Swartz's suicide, by presenting the project as being carried out in memory of Aaron Swartz.[72]

Equally, the still relatively common practice of copyrighting appropriated material suggests that there is a new re-territorializing logic in effect in literary curating. What the term literary curator suggests is that new curatorial and promotional identities are constantly produced to substitute for the debunked author. One should not forget, for example, Ron Silliman's comment, according to which "Kenny Goldsmith's actual art project is the projection of Kenny Goldsmith,"[73] a comment with which Goldsmith himself agrees by writing that "I'm not that radical [...] my name is still on those objects, and all those decisions are so much in the service of upholding notions of my own genius."[74] The balances of power, of course, differ between projects: some literary curators credit the producers, while others keep them anonymous. For example, Campbell indexes all the contributors on the webpage of *1001 Nights Cast*, whereas *Google Poetics* does not include the names of the contributors. What is common to all such curated projects, however, is that the curator has the power in her/his hands. It is the decision of the reproducer whether visibility and power are granted to the others.

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[66] Thurston, *Publishing as Reading*, 425.

[67] Scott Lash, *Critique of Information* (London: SAGE, 2006), 208.

[68] Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*, 84–85.

[69] Ibid., 11, 85.

[70] See e.g. Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge, Mass.: Swerve Editions, 1992), 51, Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2003), xxii–xxiii and Paul Patton, "Deterritorialization + Politics," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 70–71.

[71] Goldsmith, *Uncrative Writing*, 101.

[72] Kenneth Goldsmith, "Papers from Philosophical Transactions of the Royal," *Printing out the Internet*, April 2, 2014, accessed November 20, 2014, http://printingtheinternet.tumblr.com/post/81475510510/papers-from-philosophical-transactions-of-the.

[73] Ron Silliman, "Kenneth Goldsmith," February 27, 2006, accessed November 20, 2014, http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/goldsmith/silliman_goldsmith.html.

Finally, the socio-political effects of literary curating remain a contested and ambiguous territory. Many commentators seem to suggest that the varying practices of curating and publishing discussed in this article hold a progressive potential. Goldsmith reads uncreative writing next to the work of politically radical situationists,[75] and Thurston suggests that reproductive writing (especially when accompanied by self publishing) "countermands the capitalist logic of massification."[76] However, one can see such projects equally well as being fully compatible with, if not subsumed by, the logic of the market. Literary curating can be seen as a practice that creates distinctions, organizes texts, limits the proliferation of meanings, and offers them in commodity-like-packages for the cultural market. Thus, the literary curator would be just an extension of the author function, the main purpose of which, according to Foucault is to allow the "limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one's resources and riches, but also with one's discourses and their significations."[77] According to this line of thinking, the abundance of information and texts would only constitute the surface, below which a scarcity remains, that of attention and meaningful discourses.

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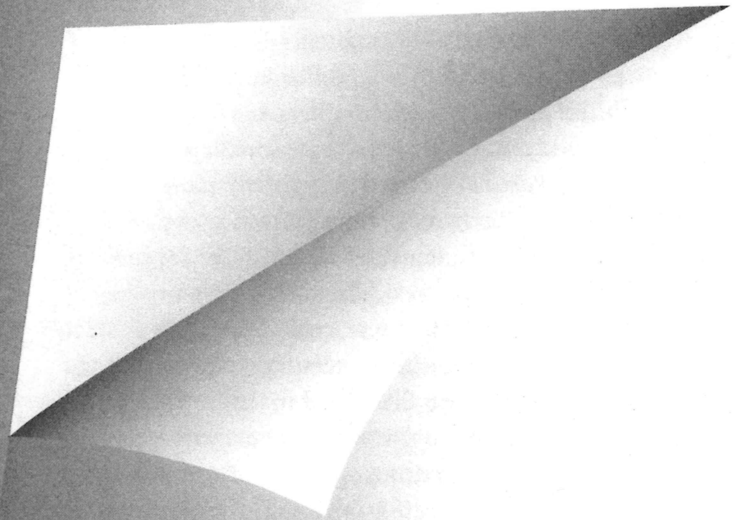
[74] Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*, 120.

[75] See Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*.

[76] Thurston, *Publishing as Reading*, 425.

[77] Foucault, "What is an Author?" 118.



Inter Folia, Aves: Reading Bird Books as Curatorial-Editorial Constellations

Anna-Sophie Springer

Inter Folia, Aves: Reading Bird Books as Curatorial-Editorial Constellations

Anna-Sophie Springer

Oddly, I cannot remember any single book in the library, but the idea of a library containing books filled with birds caught my attention. The idea stays with me yet.

John G. T. Anderson, *Deep Things Out of Darkness: A History of Natural History*, 2013

The art that I am interested in can be communicated with books and catalogues. [...] It becomes primary information, while the reproduction of conventional art in books and catalogues is necessarily secondary information. [...] When information is primary, the catalogue can become the exhibition and the catalogue auxiliary to it.

Seth Siegelaub, in interview with Ursula Meyer, 1968

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the modern printing press in 1450 caused the first media revolution. While up until then one specific Book dominated the production and interpretation of medieval scholarship, the introduction of movable type opened infinitely more possibilities for selecting, ordering, and disseminating written texts—as well as images. Quickly spreading beyond the realm of the clergy, book production multiplied in fifteenth-century Europe, gradually turning publishing into a mass medium with an expanding public. With religion thus losing its traditional monopoly on the written word, new types of knowledge infrastructures superseded scholarly religious institutions such as scriptoria and their attendant monastic book collections. But in addition to the modern secular library, to a degree the modern natural history museum also developed as an institutional corollary of newly accessible printed matter.[1] In the realm of natural science, the discipline of biology in particular arose from this legacy, as it aggregated from the translation and interplay between zoological expeditions, museological specimen collections, and bookish taxonomical arrays.[2]

When considering the printed book as an art form, the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (originally entitled *Schedel'sche Weltchronik*, 1493) and Peter Apian's *Astronomicum Caesarium* (1540) are popular early examples that emphasize the relevant interrelationships between image, text, design, and the general structure possible in books. In both of these cases, besides the research and production of the content, the process of assembling the books *as books* was also part of the general work of their authors. Apian, for instance, wrote the texts while also producing and preparing the prints of the first editions of his atlas. Similar to many independent publishing projects in the contemporary art world, in this early era of book culture the editorial stages of consolidating material for publication and the various activities of producing objects for public circulation were still part and parcel. However, due to our conventional understanding that art and science are "heavens apart," the mesmerizing genealogy of the illustrated natural history book still finds too little attention paid to the history of publishing as an artistic practice.[3] By expanding this field of enquiry and stepping into the realm of the curatorial, however, such

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Seth Siegelaub, in interview with Ursula Meyer, 1968

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the modern printing press in 1450 caus the first media revolution. While up until then one specific Book domina the production and interpretation of medieval scholarship, the introducti of movable type opened infinitely more possibilities for selecting, orderi and disseminating written texts—as well as images. Quickly spreading b yond the realm of the clergy, book production multiplied in fifteenth-centu Europe, gradually turning publishing into a mass medium with an expandi public. With religion thus losing its traditional monopoly on the written wo new types of knowledge infrastructures superseded scholarly religious in tutions such as scriptoria and their attendant monastic book collections. in addition to the modern secular library, to a degree the modern natura tory museum also developed as an institutional corollary of newly acces printed matter.[1] In the realm of natural science, the discipline of biolog particular arose from this legacy, as it aggregated from the translatio interplay between zoological expeditions, museological specimen collec and bookish taxonomical arrays.[2]

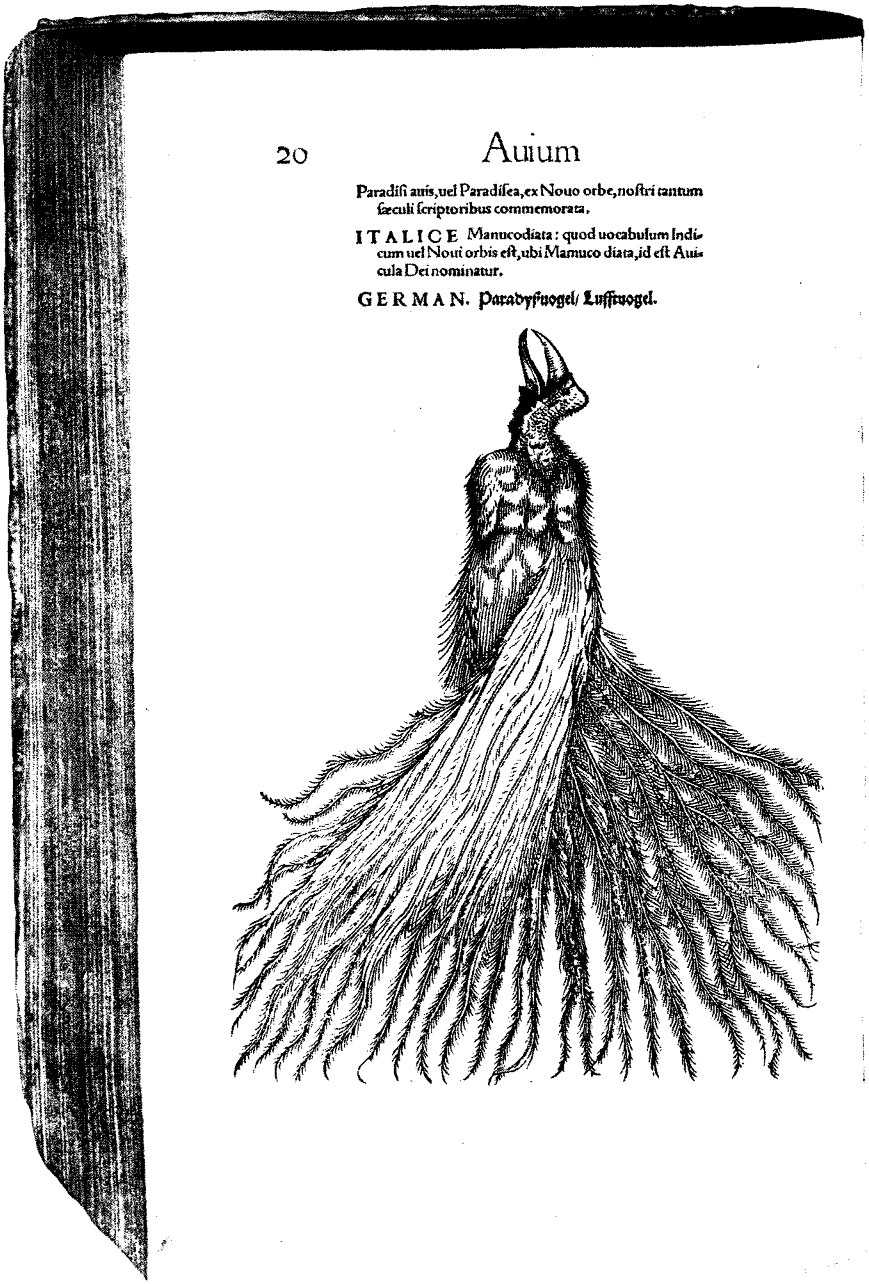
When considering the printed book as an art form, the *Nur Chronicle* (originally entitled *Schedel'sche Weltchronik*, 1493) and Peter A *Astronomicum Caesarium* (1540) are popular early examples that emp the relevant interrelationships between image, text, design, and the g structure possible in books. In both of these cases, besides the researc production of the content, the process of assembling the books *as boo* also part of the general work of their authors. Apian, for instance, wro texts while also producing and preparing the prints of the first editions atlas. Similar to many independent publishing projects in the contemp art world, in this early era of book culture the editorial stages of consoli material for publication and the various activities of producing objec public circulation were still part and parcel. However, due to our conven understanding that art and science are "heavens apart," the mesme genealogy of the illustrated natural history book still finds too little at paid to the history of publishing as an artistic practice.[3] By expandi field of enquiry and stepping into the realm of the curatorial, howev foundational disciplinary concerns can be more easily navigated. It turns out that for those asking how publishing and the curatorial relate and intersect, natural history books open up unique pathways beyond art history.

In this context, the European bird book stands out as a particularly multivalent publication subspecies to explore. Often created as collaborations between field explorers, bird collection curators, and illustrators, early ornithological monographs uniquely interweave the medium of the book into the humanities. Furthermore, over several centuries the bird book was a space where zoological taxonomies were proposed, arranged, negotiated, and frequently dismissed, thus constituting a central device through which nature became constructed, ordered, and displayed. As historian of science Emma C. Spary has emphasized with regards to the gradual codification of ornithology, "a species can be made manifest in three ways, as specimen or technological object in a collection, as description (text) or verbal object, and finally as illustration or visual object."[4] Rather than "real" nature, bird books embody the entanglements of birds, things, and words; by operating across various semiotic levels at once, they are curatorial-editorial by nature. In order to gain insight into the role of publishing in relation to the curatorial, this essay will therefore spend some time looking at the history of bookmaking through the peculiar lens of ornithology.

One initial remark on terminology, however: While in the context of bookmaking practices the German term "verlegen" unambiguously refers to the work of an official publishing house (a "Verlag"), the English "publishing" is more polysemic; it also includes the concepts of public exposure and authorship that resonate with the German "publizieren." Besides the trade, "publishing" can thus also refer more generally to preparing content in order to make something (research) known and available to public circulation, display, or dissemination, but the word has a stronger authorial ring to it than "editing" while also including more diverse practices than "writing." Since we will examine the knowledge production of a series of well-known authors from the history of natural history, it seems appropriate to speak of "publishing" and "editorial" work because both of these terms comprise a number of activities and levels of researching, preparing, organizing, and issuing material in the context of content and book production. But as we shall see, the dimension of the curatorial as an intellectual-aesthetic methodology can also exert itself in the space of publications. And it is the particular frictions produced in this inherently dynamic field of connections and constellations that set certain books apart from the incredibly vast general publishing landscape. By focusing on a selection of bird books we will begin to perceive publications not only as editorial but also curatorial spaces.

For centuries, Southeast Asian birds of paradise were known in Europe merely as dead objects. Bird skins—imperfectly preserved, and often with amputated legs—were delivered as exotic finds by colonial explorers. When Juan Sebastián Elcano came back from circumnavigating the globe, arriving on Magellan's vessel *Victoria* in 1522 with what historians consider the first five of these feetless bird-of-paradise skins, they stirred quite a sensation the Spanish court.[5] Without any field experience of the animals in their habitat, for a long time Europeans assumed a hybrid mythology, bequeathed in part by the native hunters of New Guinea: that these novel birds were pure paradisiacal creatures, living in the sky and never landing on Earth, except to die. While their legendary early skins have now long withered and disappeared, the curious imagination surrounding them still remains recognizable in sixteenth-century depictions.[6] These representations show strange, feathered creatures that undulate among the clouds, a little more fish-like perhaps than bird-like—for they lack any spread wings, and as mentioned above, usually have no feet.

The earliest known such woodcut image was published in 1555 by the Swiss polymath Conrad Gessner (1516–1565) in the bird volume of his popular *Historia Animalium.* Whereas the majority of pictures on Gessner's pages depict birds standing sideways (usually perched on a branch or rock and appearing quite alive and healthy), the entry on "De Paradisea" conveys a severed and stuffed bird skin's typically deformed version of true animal anatomy. Although Gessner is esteemed among the first Renaissance men to ever compile a collection of objects for the immediate study of natural history, the Latin entry below this particular image states that it is based on correspondence with a humanist from Nuremberg.[7] Indeed, it is unclear whether Gessner ever had a chance to actually see a bird-of-paradise skin with his own eyes. It would not be surprising if he had not, for much of Gessner's content relies on older sources, including the writings of Pliny the Elder.[8] In the specific case of the birds of paradise, Gessner's account includes references to one of the very first written descriptions made in a report from 1521 by Antonio Pigafetta, the chronicler of Magellan's voyage.[9] Copying from other manuscripts had been routine practice in the hand-scribed publishing culture of the Middle Ages; as a way to compensate for the lack of personal experience, it easily survived the introduction of the printing press. According to German ornithologist Erwin Stresemann, Gessner was a voracious reader who "combed through classical and medieval literature with unparalleled thoroughness for apposite references [...] and [...] managed to fill 806 closely printed folio pages with the discussion of only 180 species of birds."[10] But Gessner's consolidated tale about the birds of paradise imagines fantastical things such as the male and female birds breeding their eggs in a cavity between their bodies while hovering in the air, bound together by the male's skinny tale feathers. Given it would take 300 more years until European naturalists finally observed these animals in the wild thanks to Alfred Russel Wallace's tireless collecting in the Malay Archipelago,[11] this early ornithological entry makes wonderfully clear the complicated negotiation between facts and fabrications inherent in the process of gaining a "complete knowledge" of nature—a representation progressively shaped through the work and projections of artists, scientists, and intellectuals.[12] In this respect, the scientific history of understanding the birds of paradise is unique because their first physical evidence of nearly "bodiless" specimens indeed corresponded with



20 Auium

Paradiſi auis,uel Paradiſea,ex Nouo orbe,noſtri tantum ſæculi ſcriptoribus commemorata.

ITALICE Manucodiata: quod uocabulum Indicum uel Noui orbis eſt,ubi Mamuco diata,id eſt Auicula Dei nominatur.

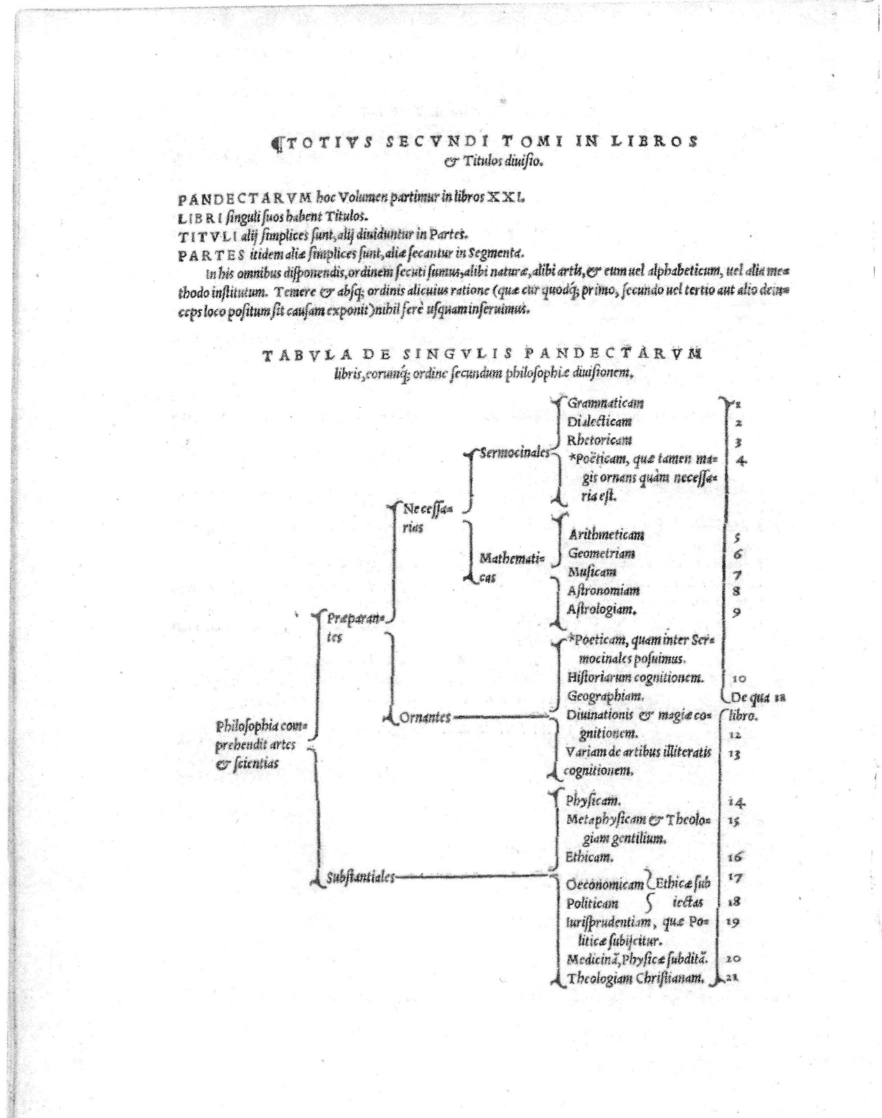
GERMAN. Paradyſuogel/ Lufftuogel.

Fig. 1. Bird of paradise illustration from Conrad Gessner, *Icones Avium Omnium, Quae in Historia Avium Conradi Gesneri Describuntur Cum Nomenclaturis Singulorum* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1555). Universitäts und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle; VD16 G 1732.

their ethereal and supernatural mythology [fig. 1]. Feathers and beaks made them classifiable as birds, but in contrast to more "normal" birds, their immensely colorful though disfigured physique nevertheless also directly suggested elements of the fantastic. The puzzling sphere of the distant imaginary and the objective reality of scientific specimens thus coincided in those specimens even more immediately than in many other exotic finds.[13]

Gessner's work compiling some of the most respected illustrated encyclopedias of flora and fauna of his time seems to have grown out of another project driven by a desire for a "complete knowledge," which he had been pursuing since long before publishing the first edition of his bird book, *De Avium Natura* (1555). With texts becoming more available and the repositories of libraries expanding, Gessner aimed to provide librarians and readers with a detailed overview of the hitherto published eruditions. Already in the 1540s, he thus produced the initial two tomes of what would eventually become a library of altogether twenty-one books on books. Entitled *Biblioteca Universalis,* this publication series is a lengthy index of scientific intellections from antiquity to his present. It was also one of those Borgesian dreams of universal knowledge, for it transcended the already existing device of a library catalog organized merely by authors' names. Instead, Gessner's annotated version offered meticulous evaluations, summaries, and para-textual descriptions of more than 10,000 written works arranged by subject and thematic keyword, promising extensive insight and understanding. Stresemann writes that Gessner was deeply "motivated by an urge to assemble and organize facts."[14] With respect to his *Biblioteca Universalis,* this is further reflected in Gessner's introduction of a visual system for ordering and classifying the relayed scholarship. Published in 1549, he devised a tree structure [fig. 2] similar to those later designs known from zoologists such as Linnaeus, Darwin, and Haeckel, who all used tree diagrams to visualize living beings in hierarchical sequences. Unsatisfied with a mere list of available library material, Gessner aimed at drawing connections by actualizing the possible relationships between the accumulated information. Indeed, the tree diagram visualizes a constellation; by proposing a specific, spatialized order it partakes in the production of page-based meaning in a way we would today call curatorial.

From a contemporary point of view, the curatorial manifests itself among the many possible epistemic practices by creating proposals that operate through and across the fields of thing, word, image, and text, as well as through elements of performance, design, collaboration, and public exposure. As one of its many aspects, the curatorial can involve an invitation into an open-ended experience based on a practice of selecting, arranging, placing, and relating elements borrowed from an infinite archive of old and less old. In such a structure, it is less the isolated individual elements that conjure significance or knowledge, but their arrangement in mutual proximity as an *ensemble*—however multistable. Curatorial engagements partake in creating spaces, stories, experiences, and objects by activating (excavating, challenging, recalling, assembling) spaces, stories, experiences, and objects. When



¶TOTIVS SECVNDI TOMI IN LIBROS & Titulos diuiſio.

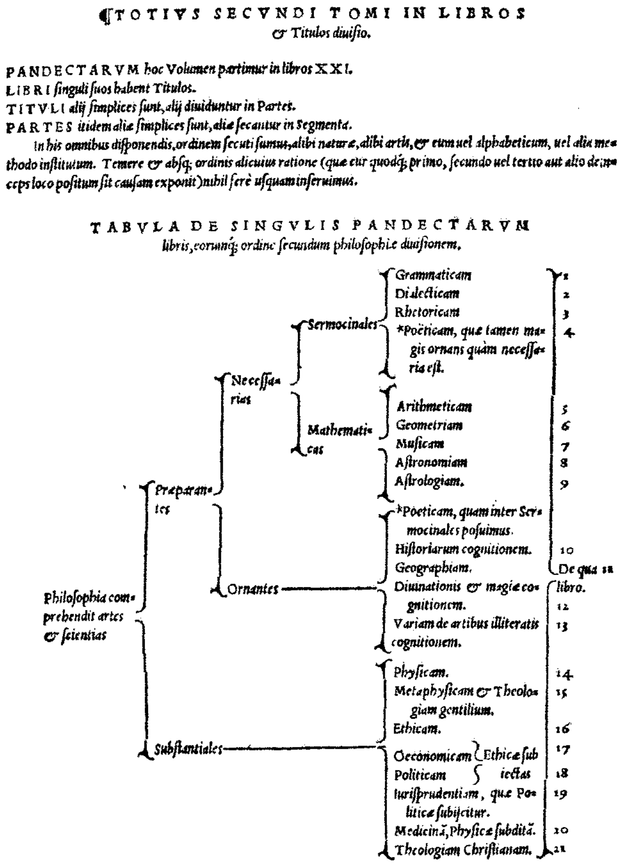
PANDECTARVM hoc Volumen partimur in libros XXI.
LIBRI ſinguli ſuos habent Titulos.
TITVLI alij ſimplices ſunt, alij diuiduntur in Partes.
PARTES itidem aliæ ſimplices ſunt, aliæ ſecantur in Segmenta.

In his omnibus diſponendis, ordinem ſecuti ſumus, alibi naturæ, alibi artis, & eum uel alphabeticum, uel alia methodo inſtitutum. Temere & abſq; ordinis alicuius ratione (quæ cur quodq; primo, ſecundo uel tertio aut alio deinceps loco poſitum ſit cauſam exponit) nihil ferè uſquam inſeruimus.

TABVLA DE SINGVLIS PANDECTARVM libris, eorumq; ordine ſecundum philoſophiæ diuiſionem.

- Philoſophia comprehendit artes & ſcientias
  - Præparantes
    - Neceſſarias
      - Sermocinales
        - Grammaticam 1
        - Dialecticam 2
        - Rhetoricam 3
        - *Poëticam, quæ tamen magis ornans quàm neceſſaria eſt. 4
      - Mathematicas
        - Arithmeticam 5
        - Geometriam 6
        - Muſicam 7
        - Aſtronomiam 8
        - Aſtrologiam. 9
    - Ornantes
      - *Poeticam, quam inter Sermocinales poſuimus.
      - Hiſtoriarum cognitionem. 10
      - Geographiam. De qua 11 libro.
      - Diuinationis & magiæ cognitionem. 12
      - Variam de artibus illiteratis cognitionem. 13
  - Subſtantiales
    - Phyſicam. 14
    - Metaphyſicam & Theologiam gentilium. 15
    - Ethicam. 16
    - Oeconomicam 17 } Ethicæ ſubiectas
    - Politicam 18 } Ethicæ ſubiectas
    - Iuriſprudentiam, quæ Politicæ ſubijcitur. 19
    - Medicinã, Phyſicæ ſubditã. 20
    - Theologiam Chriſtianam. 21

Fig. 2. The diagram in Conrad Gessner's *Biblioteca Universalis*, the so-called "Pandectae." In addition to serving as a table of contents, it displays a taxonomical division of philosophy suggesting interconnections among the content levels. Conrad Gessner, *Partitiones theologicae: pandectarum universalium Conradi Gesneri liber ultimus* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1549). Zentralbibliothek Zürich; VD16 G 1700.



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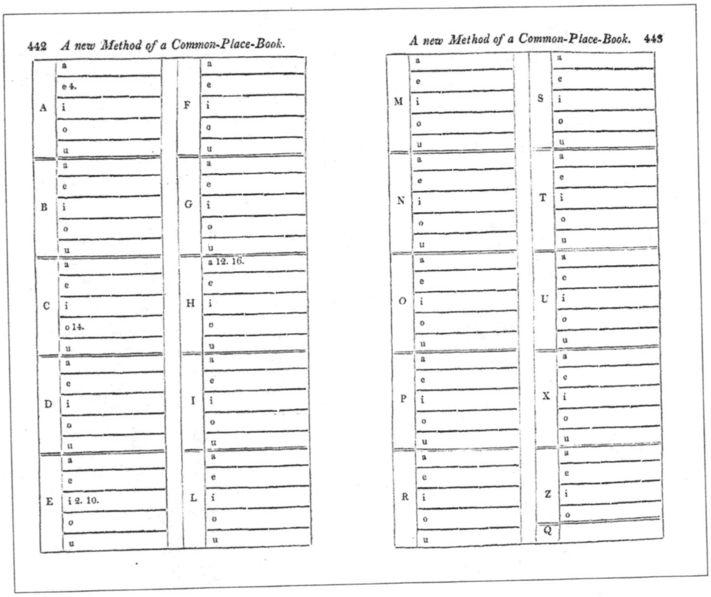

442 *A new Method of a Common-Place-Book.*

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A new Method of a Common-Place-Book. 443

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	e		e
N	i	T	i
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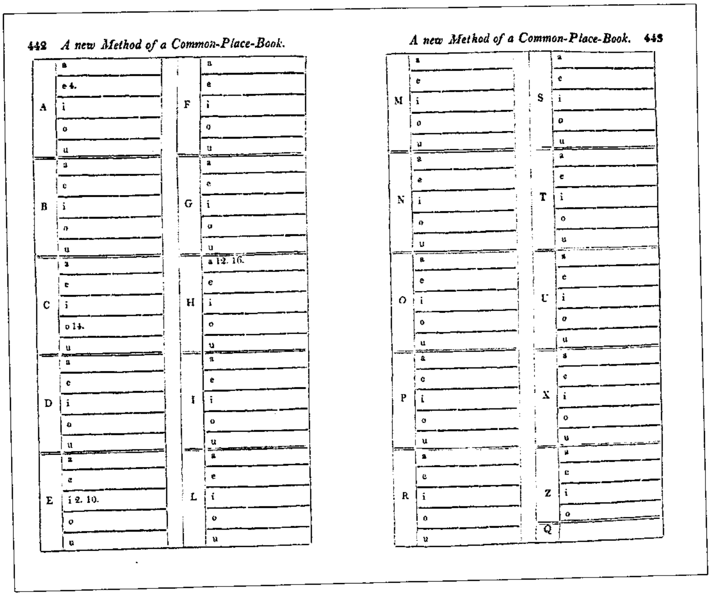
	u		u
	a		a
	e		e
O	i	U	i
	o		o
	u		u
	a		a
	e		e
P	i	X	i
	o		o
	u		u
	a		a
	e		e
R	i	Z	i
	o		o
	u	Q	

Fig. 3. Excerpting template from John Locke's "A New Method of Making Commonplace Books," in *Posthumous works of Mr. John Locke* (London: Printed by W.B. for A. and J. Churchill, 1706).

understanding such engagements as a particular way of processing material, producing conversations across disciplines and media, the size, materiality, and location—as well as the potential duration of those "spaces"—are limited merely by the imagination (and, realistically, by financial means). While the museum exhibition is the most traditional setting for curatorial agency to exert itself publically, a potential alternative in which it can act is the "paginated" realm of reproductions—the world of books and libraries.[15]

Learning about Gessner's older work is productive here because it encourages early forms of creation from within a "constellational condition." Similar to the notebooks of explorers holding data to be excerpted and reorganized later, the *Biblioteca Universalis* also represented less a conclusion than a tool for further use and the continuous diversification of scholarship. It was precisely in this sense that Gessner conceived a kind of manual for how reader-writers should approach and appropriate the mediated material practically. More than 150 years before John Locke's *A New Method of Making Commonplace Books* (1706) [fig. 3], Gessner recommended one use a special booklet that would hold one's compiled, essentially loose and thus mobile excerpts, whose arrangement could be employed for developing one's own texts and lectures.

> "Whether they need to write or to give lectures, they may arrange the accumulated raw material for their paper in this way: Either they have recently collected material or they arrange material accumulated on slips of paper according to thematic aspects for reuse, so they can take out paper slips for the treatment of the respective object, selecting from the many cards



442 *A new Method of a Common-Place-Book.*

A new Method of a Common-Place-Book. 443

	a	e	i	o	u
A	a	e 4.	i	o	u
B	a	e	i	o	u
C	a	e	i	o 14.	u
D	a	e	i	o	u
E	a	e	i 2. 10.	o	u
F	a	e	i	o	u
G	a	e	i	o	u
H	a 12. 16.	e	i	o	u
I	a	e	i	o	u
L	a	e	i	o	u
M	a	e	i	o	u
N	a	e	i	o	u
O	a	e	i	o	u
P	a	e	i	o	u
R	a	e	i	o	u
S	a	e	i	o	u
T	a	e	i	o	u
U	a	e	i	o	u
X	a	e	i	o	u
Z	a	e	i	o	
Q					

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> those that are best suited for the present subject. Using small needles, they fixate the slips in the desired order for the respective lecture and write down what seems appropriate, or use it according to desire; finally, they restore the slips of paper to their place for reuse."[16]

Together, these editorial-curatorial efforts of sourcing and selecting material, cutting and interpreting, connecting and further developing archived notes into intelligible patterns awarded Gessner the reputation of inventing the modern bibliography.[17] Projecting forward into the early twentieth century, this quoted paragraph curiously rings like an early forerunner of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne* panels, in which the iconologist explored a multiplicity of art historical and cultural topics by pinning changing arrangements of cut-out picture reproductions onto black boards.[18] Although separated historically by five centuries, conceptually both Gessner's and Warburg's practices highlight the role of articulating new theses by developing temporary relationships among the contents of a collected archive. In both cases it is the author's focus on the originality of the constellation versus the originality of the applied material alone that resonates with our contemporary notion of curatorial agency as described above, whereas the emphasis on reproduction evokes the editorial quality of working on and with the page.

Returning to the legacy of Gessner's own editorial productions, the aforementioned book on avifauna was a particularly great success—regardless of the amount of verbose pseudo-knowledge it contained. Its original Latin version was quickly translated into other languages, most notably German (*Vogelbuch*, 1557/1582/1600). But, as though they had been instilled with Gessner's bibliomanic spirit of cross-pollination, even the birds themselves continued to flutter "between the leaves"[19] of numerous other authors' books. Ulisse Aldrovandi was the first to heavily recycle from Gessner; he published three volumes entitled *Ornithologia* in 1599, 1600, and 1603 [fig. 4]. In the mid-seventeenth century, John Johnstone compiled yet another bird book containing almost entirely borrowed material, including many aesthetically pleasing illustrations copied directly from both Gessner and Aldrovandi's images.

Regarding the circulation, borrowing, and transformation of already existing knowledge and material on birds, two details should be noted. First, the majority of the 217 woodcuts in the first edition of Gessner's bird book were not literally made by Gessner, but were illustrated for him as he orchestrated a whole network of aesthetically gifted international correspondents, many of whom had more field experience with birds than Gessner himself.[20] While other publications such as the Frenchman Pierre Belon's folio *L'histoire de la nature des oyseaux* (also published in 1555) presented visual material meticulously created by its author, Gessner's *De Avium Natura* is a space to showcase artistic productions (and frequent errors) of a number of colleagues in the manner of a curatorial-editorial arrangement. Second, in the context of many bird books similar to Gessner's, the images of the birds themselves often constituted a pastiche of visual assemblages or pictorial collages.

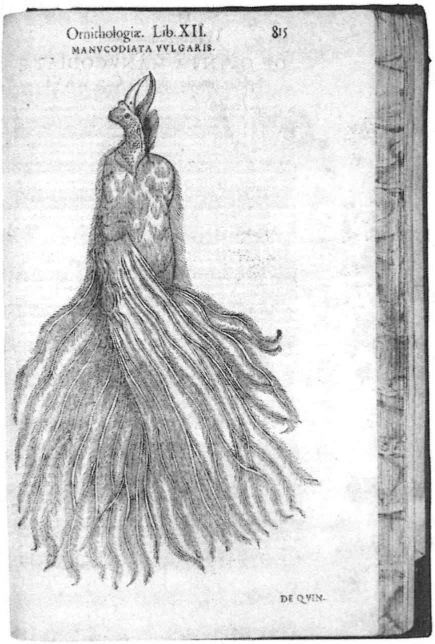
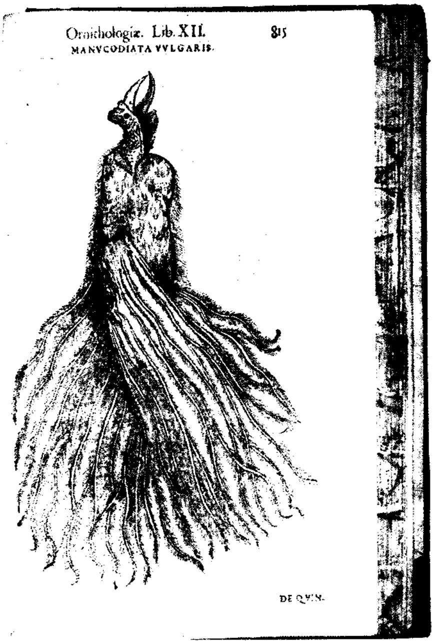

Ornithologiæ. Lib. XII.
815
MANVCODIATA VVLGARIS.
DE QVIN.

Fig. 4. The bird of paradise illustration in Aldrovandi's *Ornithologia* (1599) bears a striking resemblance to Gessner's illustration (see fig. 1). Image from *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri 12. Bononiae: Apud Franciscum de Franciscis Senensem*, 1599. Biblioteca Università di Bologna.

For some centuries, illustrations were a necessary means for distributing knowledge about exotic species and made them accessible in mediated form. Before bird taxidermy was perfected with the aid of arsenical soap by the end of the eighteenth century, specimens tended to be fragile and without much longevity, so that the visual renderings on the page were for a long time the only means of presentation in lieu of their three-dimensional models.[21] However, these images were often generated by combining impressions from several different specimens; sometimes they even represented painterly amalgamations of both living and dead animals.[22] Thus, even the micro-editorial level of the pictures' origins includes the internal logic of a heterogeneous collection of material arranged into a legible structure. Furthermore, the different mediums used to recognize birds—the specimen object and the visual and textual languages that describe it, as well as the taxonomic system and collection within which it is placed—all exert their influence on each other, thus giving shape to a representation of species. As a special case of collection, the book thus permits the visibility of birds within the framework of a produced ornithological discourse. As early ornithologists collected and distributed bird knowledge in the space between specimens, pictures, and language, the book becomes a kind of second-nature aviary—*inter folia, aves.*



Ornithologiæ. Lib. XII. 815

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Fig. 4. The bird of paradise illustration in Aldrovandi's *Ornithologia* (1599) bears a striking resemblance to Gessner's illustration (see fig. 1). Image from *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri 12. Bononiae: Apud Franciscum de Franciscis Senensem*, 1599. Biblioteca Università di Bologna.

For some centuries, illustrations were a necessary means for distributing knowledge about exotic species and made them accessible in mediated form. Before bird taxidermy was perfected with the aid of arsenical soap by the end of the eighteenth century, specimens tended to be fragile and without much longevity, so that the visual renderings on the page were for a long time the only means of presentation in lieu of their three-dimensional models.[21] However, these images were often generated by combining impressions from several different specimens; sometimes they even represented painterly amalgamations of both living and dead animals.[22] Thus, even the micro-editorial level of the pictures' origins includes the internal logic of a heterogeneous collection of material arranged into a legible structure. Furthermore, the different mediums used to recognize birds—the specimen object and the visual and textual languages that describe it, as well as the taxonomic system and collection within which it is placed—all exert their influence on each other, thus giving shape to a representation of species. As a special case of collection, the book thus permits the visibility of birds within the framework of a produced ornithological discourse. As early ornithologists collected and distributed bird knowledge in the space between specimens, pictures, and language, the book becomes a kind of second-nature aviary—*inter folia, aves.*

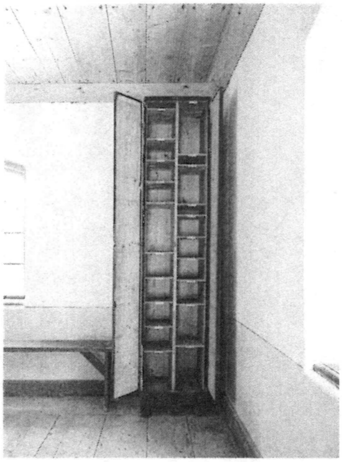

Fig. 5. One of Carl Linnaeus's herbarium cabinets with movable shelves that allowed for the rearrangement of material in response to new knowledge. Photo: Åke E:son Lindman, Museum in Altis, Hammerby, Sweden.

In her essay, "The Sciences of the Archives," historian Lorraine Daston has critiqued the assumption that the modern natural sciences were posited against the humanities through an institutional division of the laboratory and observatory on one hand, and the library and museum on the other.[23] A number of architectural floor plans of nineteenth-century natural history institutions underscore that libraries indeed remained at the heart of most of these buildings even at a time when empiricism had fully developed. Previously, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, dissection and reading activities were sometimes juxtaposed even closer together, literally taking place in the same halls. Thus, when Hinrich Lichtenstein—a medical doctor, professor, and director of the Berlin Zoological Museum in the early-to-mid-1800s—was looking for suitable new strategies for organizing the Berlin university collections, he lauded the Parisian Jardin des Plantes, which had integrated the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in 1793, as an exemplary model precisely because its curators (including the early evolutionary pioneers Georges Cuvier, Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck, and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire) no longer perpetuated the "accumulation of randomly gathered curiosities" that Lichtenstein associated with most collection rooms of the time. Thanks to the Muséum's orderly presentation of "all steps and links" in the animal kingdom, the German saw in it the *Idealmuseum* promising to solve the enigma of the world.[24]

For millennia, it had been the library that embodied the ideal of providing a storehouse for gathering all of the world's knowledge—an ancient institution compared to the establishment of the modern natural history museum. As Daston points out, some have argued that the more hands-on natural sciences, due to their inclination toward the newness of data, virtually manifested a dis-engagement with historical scholarship stored in books and libraries. But, in fact there is no such break. Rather, the library quite literally served as a direct model for the organization and classification of natural history collections, creating strong resonances between the roles of librarian and museum curator.[25] As we will see, it is in the idea of the book that these resonances find their strongest expression. For, when Lichtenstein suggested furthermore that "[a] zoological collection is completely similar to a library,"[26] he articulated a tradition of grappling with the natural history objects in a museum as if specimens were readable like the books on a shelf—and hence should also function as usable and accessible epistemic tools, that is, like books. Indeed, this relationship is most explicitly articulated in the

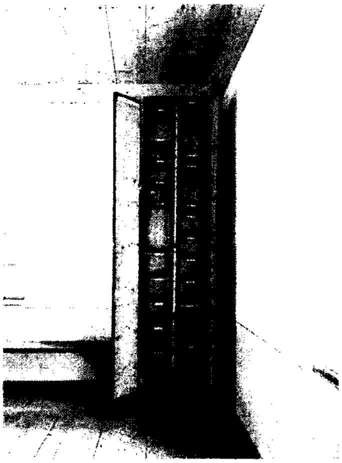

Fig. 5. One of Carl Linnaeus's herbarium cabinets with movable shelves that allowed for the rearrangement of material in response to new knowledge. Photo: Åke E:son Lindman, Museum in Altis, Hammerby, Sweden.

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In the long history of attempting to decipher nature, the naturalists of the eighteenth century—the epoch Michel Foucault named the "age of the catalogue"—were even more concerned than Gessner or Aldrovandi with resolving the relationships between living creatures in strict hierarchical systems.[28] Thus, around 100 years before the theory of evolution by natural selection would finally establish a sense of order based on transformation, Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) experimented with the so-called "Book of Nature" by drawing a direct relationship between specimen drawers and his taxonomical tables on the page.[29] Although Linnaeus did not work with a major bird collection and is not considered an authority in ornithology, the methods advanced in the twelve editions of his *Systema Naturae* (divisions in genera and species, introduction of binomial nomenclature, as well as short diagnoses) set important standards for subsequent natural history publishing, including books about birds.[30] Indeed, Linnaeus's idiosyncratic herbarium cabinet is one of the most fascinating devices for thinking about the feedback loops between curatorial and editorial treatments in natural history. Whereas he edited and published his taxonomic classification tables with the aim of visualizing a rank-based—if not outright static—biological system, the cabinet technology he devised to develop these orders was based on the opposite construction: movable and adjustable shelves. Not unlike those in Aby Warburg's idiosyncratic Hamburg library, where the stacks would be reorganized with the evolution of ideas, Linnaeus's herbarium cabinet thus exhibits "the order of things" through shifts, adaptations, and changing neighbors.[31] As we will see, multidimensional translation processes were indeed necessary in order for him to shift between the three dimensions of the cabinet and the two dimensions of the charts. As historian of science Staffan Müller-Wille writes, "[t]he apparently rigid surface of the taxonomic 'tableau' was an outcome of the gradually expanding circulation of things rather than the result of a sudden registering of an entirely different order of thinking."[32] Müller-Wille also points out that a common organization method among naturalists up until Linnaeus included binding the sheets that held their pressed botanical specimens into quasi-books, in which the specimens would necessarily acquire a finite order. Linnaeus's cabinet on the other hand provided shelves and pigeonholes for serially organizing the herbarium sheets [fig. 5]. When new material was added to the collection that necessitated adjustments to the status quo, the shelves could be moved up and down allowing for smooth insertions at any given place; likewise, sheets could also be removed without having to tear apart the entire collection.[33]

Looking at publishing from a curatorial point of view can enable us to perceive the medium of the book as more than merely a surface of information. Instead, publishing crystallizes as a form of curatorial practice when a book, its contents, and component parts tease out a tension between object and representation, but a tension where these categories themselves become unstable variables. Publishing as a curatorial practice thus emphasizes the spatio-temporal and performative role of relationships, connectivities, and juxtapositions—ultimately influencing the idea of what a book is or can be.[34] Linnaeus's cabinet evinces this curatorial quality precisely by breaking with the tradition of the botanical quasi-book as an inflexible codex and replacing it with a multistable reading machine. Conceived as a unique shelving system for the book of nature gathered from the world outside, the collations and constellations achieved in the interior of the device begin to act back upon Linnaeus's own books in the process of his publishing them:[35] "What thus counts for the collector is no longer the individual objects in the collection, but their place in an endless, serial system whose links mutually represent themselves as well as their respective species."[36] With the goal of organizing divine nature taxonomically, Linnaeus accumulated around 16,000 botanical specimens, naming and systematizing thousands of plant species into twenty-four classes—each of which had a separate slot in the cabinet. In addition to these, his books—notably the *Species Plantarum* (1751) and especially the tenth edition of his aforementioned *Systema Naturae* (1758)—unfolded the corresponding schematic visualizations.

Meanwhile in Paris, in 1758 one of the largest European bird collections of its time had just changed ownership upon the death of the influential René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur (1683–1757), who had been sustaining a private *cabinet d'histoire naturelle*, which for its period was enormous. With a huge international network to receive birds from all corners of the world, Réaumur was an esteemed pioneer in modern bird taxidermy and also one of the first naturalists to stuff and mount bird skins using wire to imitate more life-like poses than hitherto was common. In addition to the unparalleled extent of the bird collection itself, it was this advancement in display practices that led to two more illustrated bird books worth knowing about in our context because of the curiously curatorial ways in which they intertwine the relations between birds, things, and words.

Created in the 1760–70s, both of these books have been lauded as the "vanguards of a new type of study of birds."[37] Their respective authors were Mathurin Jacques Brisson (1723–1806) and Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707–1788), two eighteenth-century rivals who both used Réaumur's bird collection—albeit at different times. Though they departed from the same objects, their outcomes were quite different, both in scientific information and aesthetic style. Whereas Brisson aimed for more neutral or objectively descriptive passages in the tradition of the Renaissance encyclopedia, Buffon preferred to enrich his descriptions with narrative interpretations and metaphorical embellishments. While Brisson's six-part *Ornithologie* (1760) was the last publication he ever produced, Buffon's *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux* (1772) would be one early element in a monumental natural history writing project that, by the time he died in 1788, had ballooned to thirty-six volumes.

Employed as collection curator by Réaumur until the latter's death in 1757, Brisson's research position was not unlike that of Conrad Gessner's—lacking experience with living birds in the wild but nevertheless inspired by the promise of the "complete survey." By carefully studying Réaumur's birds, as well as the skins in other Paris collections (most notably, Pierre-Jean Etienne Mauduyt's), Brisson indeed succeeded in tripling the list of hitherto known species—compared to, for example, the bird species listed in Linneaus's book from 1758.[38] In contrast to this vast expansion of the perspective on the avifaunal world, the essential function of Brisson's ornithology, however, turns out to be an introspective interest in the collection catalog:

> "I have been led to think of arranging the animal kingdom into an order different from those used up to the present time. My intention in this labor was solely to instruct myself and to place myself in the position of being able to judge the most convenient place to put a specimen of a new animal which would arrive to be placed in a cabinet."[39]

Similar to the case described above for Linnaeus, Brisson's work with the bird collection and his publishing activities thus created another curatorial-editorial feedback loop. He wrote a complex ornithological history that was both based on the bird objects in his and other collections, and which he also employed to arrange the specimens under his care based on the artificial system he had devised for them. Working with bird skins and mounted specimens, Brisson's ornithological system thus has to be understood as emerging from the space between his own six books and the collection. In other words, constructed from a museum curator's perspective, "[n]aturalist treatises such as Brisson's not only constituted a discourse *about* the collection, but also a level of the collection itself."[40] Limited to the birds' external appearance, unanimated by field experience of their behavior or natural environments, Brisson's writing conventions have been described by the historian of science Paul Lawrence Farber as reflecting a "stiff museum posture." In his estimation, "Brisson's *Ornithologie* is a good example of the collection-catalogue approach to natural history. The selection of material, the style, the scope, and its audience are all linked to a particular famous collection."[41] The result is a sense of artificiality that not even the over 200 fine bird engravings ordered from the gifted illustrator François-Nicolas Martinet (1731–1800) easily counterbalance [fig. 6]. In her own comparison of Brisson and Buffon, E.C. Spary on the other hand points out that the internal organization of Brisson's volumes and individual descriptions are structured in independent segments where the combined descriptions and visual renderings of the birds "function as distinguishable units like the material objects."[42] As an author and ornithologist, Brisson was indeed looking for ways to produce shifts and transfers between the material, scientific bird objects and the knowledge represented in his taxonomy, the printed bird images, and ornithological texts.

This career, however, ended abruptly with the death of Réaumur, following which the collection was transferred to the Cabinet du Roi of the Jardin du Roi, whose director since 1739 had been the ambitious and hugely

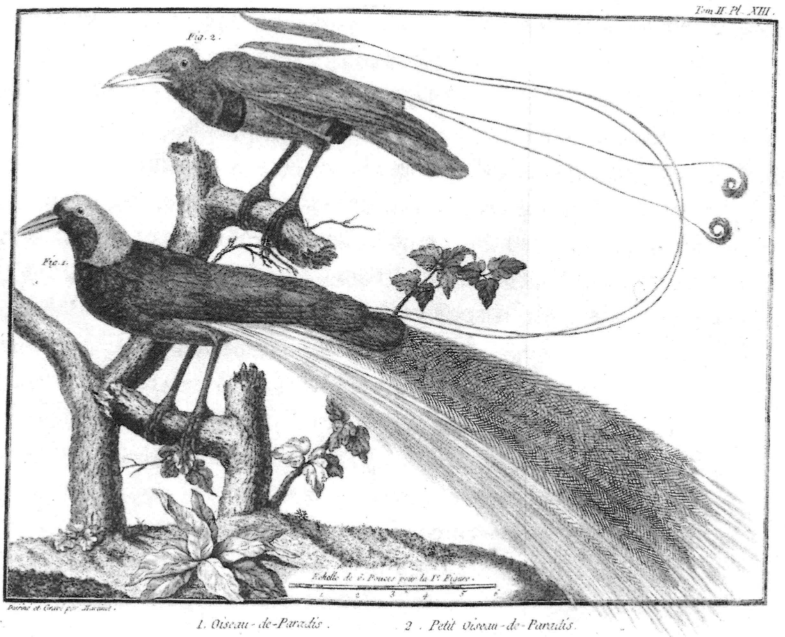
Tom. II. Pl. XIII.
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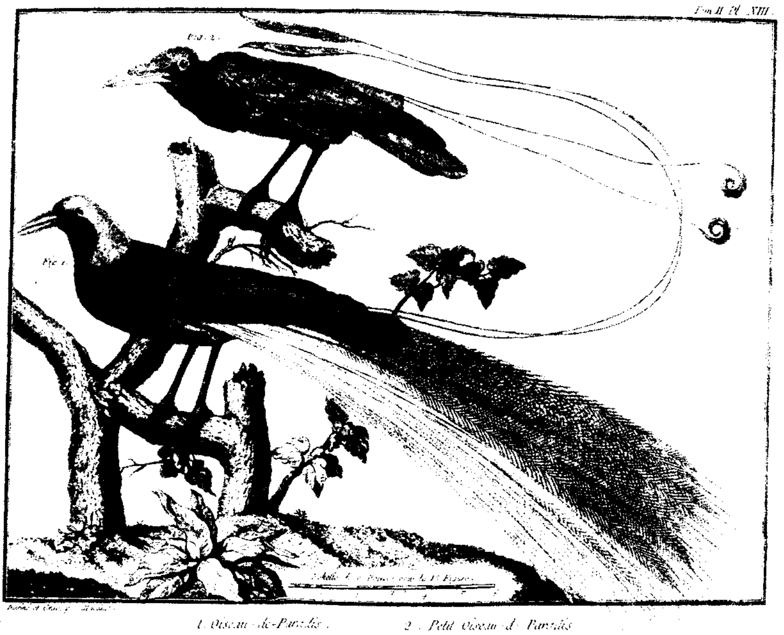
Fig. 1.
Echelle de 6 Pouces pour la 1re Figure.
Dessiné et Gravé par Martinet.
1. Oiseau-de-Paradis.
2. Petit Oiseau-de-Paradis.

Fig. 6. Bird of paradise engraving by François-Nicolas Martinet for Mathurin Jacques Brisson, *Ornithologie, ou méthode contenant la division des oiseaux en ordres, sections, genres espèces & leurs varieties*, vol. 2 (Paris: Quay des Augustins, 1760), plate XIII. SCD de l'Université de Strasbourg.

successful Comte de Buffon. Due to professional enmity between Buffon and Réaumur, Brisson no longer had access to the birds, while Buffon was keen on increasing the import of the Jardin. Obtaining Réaumur's collection was an immense stroke of luck for Buffon, considering the fact that Réaumur had been one of Buffon's harshest critics and outspokenly questioned his scientific objectivity. Indeed, Buffon's *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux* turned out add odds with Brisson's—even though both had recourse to the same specimens and Buffon even hired the same engraver, Martinet, to produce bird images in collaboration with nearly eighty other artists. Where Brisson had tried to soberly describe species and fit them into a classificatory order, Buffon was more interested in producing an encyclopedia of living beings that would explain the life of the natural world. "While Brisson's text was supposed to appear scientific thanks to its minimal aesthetics, Buffon enveloped his species groupings and efforts for exactitude regarding body sizes and physical features in a narrative context which tended to focus on luxury, rarity, and a preciousness that was the result of the limitless creative power of nature."[43] Buffon often described birds by lending literary affect and comparing them to fancy gemstones or, in other cases, monstrosities and absurd errors. He did not, however, believe that extensive textual descriptions were the right means to depict a sufficient portrait of a species: "There are not even the proper terms in any language to express the nuances, the hues, the reflections and the blendings."[44] And this is why the pictures in Brisson and Buffon are so



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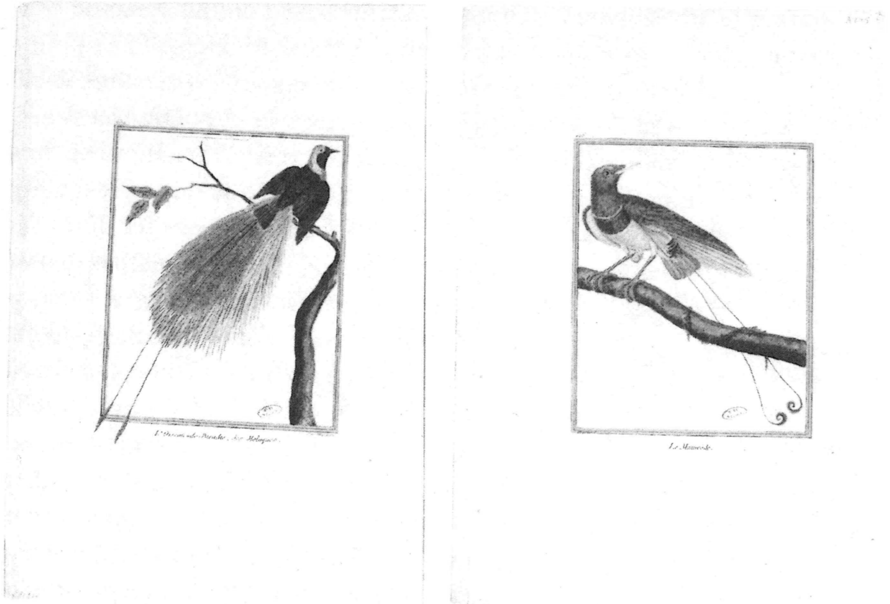

Fig. 7, 8. Colored bird of paradise engravings by François-Nicolas Martinet for Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux* (Paris: de l'Imprimerie royale, 1771–86). BPU Neuchâtel.

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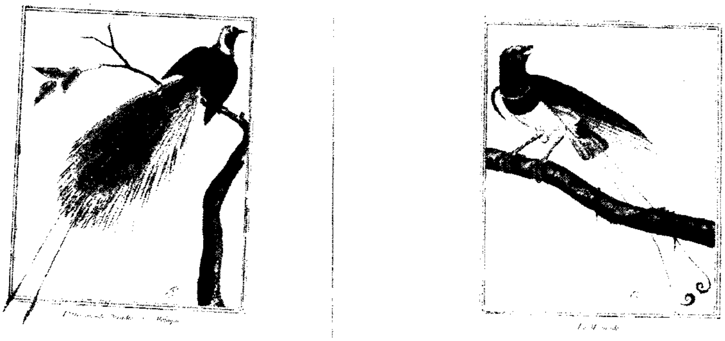
From a curatorial point of view, what is perhaps most interesting about Buffon's history of birds is his estimation of Nature as a "grand tableau filled with interesting and complex relationships," which he tried to render experiential through his editorial decisions.[45] While the previous examples given here seemingly tried to render the focus onto nature sharper and



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In a wider trajectory of development, the vivacious representational style of nature, which Martinet created in two dimensions for Buffon's bird books, can be seen as a precursor to the so-called habitat dioramas that would come into being in the new public natural history museums over subsequent decades and centuries, producing yet another instance where the page shaped the curatorial dimension of museum collections. By the 1780s, the novelty of arsenical soap as a reliable treatment in bird taxidermy was finally circulating, making it easier to produce lasting specimens. It was also around the same period that the first public museums opened, drawing their audiences with the attraction of large bird collections such as the Museum Leverianum in London (opened in 1775) and Charles Willson Peale's natural history museum in Philadelphia (opened in 1786). As Peale was both a painter and a naturalist, his display is worth mentioning here for two reasons. On the one hand he contributed to the advancement of more realistic museum displays through a particular sense of theatricality where he would first create the illusion of inner anatomy by mounting his specimens on carefully modeled wooden forms and then installing his birds in glass cases that included real elements of vegetation, as well as rocks—all situated in front of painted landscape backgrounds. Indeed, this technique was so revolutionary that it "would not be used again until the early twentieth century, when the American artists Carl Akeley and James Lippitt Clark developed a similar sculptural approach to taxidermy."[46] The 140 glass-fronted display cases Peale created for his museum are clearly recognizable in his famous self-portrait, *The Artist in His Museum* (1822), where Peale is seen lifting a curtain to his exhibition gallery called the Long Hall. Stacked along the left wall of this gallery, Peale's "bird wall" embodied a second idiosyncratic display strategy. It was one of the first ever examples of presenting a collection organized according to the hierarchies of the Linnean taxonomic system featured in the aforementioned *Systema Naturae*. Again, while naturalists developed taxonomies by transferring and organizing theories gathered from a mixture of fieldwork, correspondence, and research on collections (as well as religious and other worldviews) into publishable charts and tree diagrams, ever since Peale, natural history curators have come up with new ways of re-presenting these ideas spatially, one contemporary example being the so-called "Biodiversity Wall" in the Berlin Natural History Museum.

But not all avifaunal collections are as well organized as Peale's once was. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, for instance, invites ornithologists and bird enthusiasts into their library as a special place for "birdwatching." The aim is to collaborate with the collection curators in determining the names of unidentified birds depicted in rare historic books, rendered in exotic porcelain cups and statues, and woven into luxurious tapestries for the museum's open-access digital collection on Wikipedia's Wikimedia Commons and Wikidata.[47] Against the background of the historical examples discussed, contemporary projects like this show that birds continue to fascinate and challenge the human mind—yet also that they are still sometimes hard to catch. The fact that birds, while alive, are constantly in motion, able to fly off into inaccessible spheres at any moment, confronted early ornithologists with a special situation. Before reliable taxidermy, photography, film, and even DNA analysis, books turned out a useful medium for their capture. But as we have seen through our case study of bird books, the fluttering quality of birds can find its way back into the very practices that inform publishing. Exploring these dynamics as curatorial-editorial constellations demonstrates the variegated and multistable trajectories that animate the connections between the world, the page, and the book space.

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1 On the relationships of natural history and the library, see Lorraine Daston, "The Sciences of the Archive," *Osiris* 27, no. 1 (2012): 156–187.

2 See Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

3 Claus Nissen, *Die illustrierten Vogelbücher* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann Verlag, 1953), 11. Unless otherwise noted all translations from the German are the author's own.

4 Emma C. Spary, "Codes der Leidenschaft: Französische Vogelsammlungen als eine Sprache der vornehmen Gesellschaft des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Sammeln als Wissen. Das Sammeln und seine wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, ed. Anke te Heesen and Emma C. Spary (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2001), 41.

5 See Erwin Stresemann, *Ornithology: From Aristotle to the Present*, trans. Hans and Cathleen Epstein (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 26.

6 See Fritz Koreny, *Albrecht Dürer und die Tier- und Pflanzenstudien der Renaissance* (Munich: Prestel, 1985), Plates no. 30–34.

7 Conrad Gessner, *Historia Animalium*, vol. III (Zurich: C. Froschauer, 1555), 611.

8 S. Kusukawa, "The Sources of Gessner's Pictures for the *Historia animalium*," *Annals of Science* 67, no. 3 (July 2010): 311; Jasmina Mužinić et al., "Julije Klović: The First Colour Drawing of Greater Bird of Paradise *Paradisaea apoda* in Europe and Its Model," *Journal of Ornithology* 150, no. 3 (July 2009): 647.

9 Amanda K. Herrin, "Pioneers of the Printed Paradise: Maarten de Vos, Jan Sadeler I and Emblematic Natural History in the Late Sixteenth Century," in *Zoology in Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 360.

10 Stresemann, *Ornithology*, 18.

11 Before Wallace shipped his enormous specimens collection, which included two live birds of paradise for the Kew Gardens aviaries, to Europe, the naval apothecary and ornithologist René Primevère Lesson (1794–1849) was the first European to ever encounter the bird of paradise species in the early 1820s.

12 For a book that is more specifically concerned with the construction of "tropical nature," see Nancy Stepan, *Picturing Tropical Nature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

13 Christian Freigang, "Margaretes Paradiesvogel: Vereinnahmungen des Fremden und Wunderbaren aus der Neuen Welt im frühzeitlichen Kunstdiskurs," in *Wechselseitige Wahrnehmung der Religionen im Spätmittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ludger Grenzmann et al., vol. 1 (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2009), 78–79.

14 Stresemann, *Ornithology*, 19.

15 On the page as a curatorial space inviting imaginative connections between existing materials and knowledge, see Anna-Sophie Springer, "Melancholies of the Paginated Mind: The Library as Curatorial Space," in *Fantasies of the Library*, ed. Anna-Sophie Springer and Etienne Turpin (Berlin: K. Verlag & Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2015), 1–141.

16 Conrad Gessner, *De Indicibus Librorum* (1548), quoted in Markus Krajewski, *Paper*

Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548–1929, trans. Peter Krapp (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 13.

17 See Krajewski, *Paper Machines*, esp. "Chapter 2: Temporary Indexing."

18 For a discussion of Warburg's methodology as a legacy for curatorial-editorial practices, see Springer, "Melancholies of the Paginated Mind."

19 Here I refer to a passage by John Anderson, which directly precedes the passage quoted in the epigraph above, and moreover illuminates the title of this essay: "Best of all was the Grinnell-Miller library, a small room at one side of the collections, filled with light and housing the very books that Grinnell had worked with, each bearing his personal bookplate with his motto, *Inter folia, Aves*: 'There are birds between the leaves.'" John G.T. Anderson, *Deep Things Out Of Darkness: A History of Natural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), xiii.

20 Stresemann, *Ornithology*, 19; Kusukawa, "The Sources of Gessner's Pictures for the *Historia animalium*," 20–22.

21 In 1771, T.S. Kuckahn addressed the difficulty of satisfactory bird taxidermy in a set of four letters to the London Royal Society. This is one of the first examples where an explicit concern is expressed regarding curatorial methods of bird display: "They [bird specimens] never fail to become humid in moist air and long continued wet weather, suffer the flesh to rot and even corrode the wires made use of to confine the birds to their natural attitudes, till the whole drops to pieces on the least touch or motion." See *Philosophical Transactions LX* (London: The Royal Society, 1771), 304.

22 See, for example, Heinrich Geissler, "*Ad Vivum Pinxit*: Überlegungen zu Tierdarstellungen der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 82 (1986/7): 101–114; Karl Schulze-Hagen et al., "Avian taxidermy in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance," *Journal für Ornithologie* 144 (2003): 463.

23 Daston, "The Sciences of the Archive."

24 Carsten Kretschmann, *Räume öffnen sich – Naturhistorische Museen im Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 33.

25 However, while both are the traditional custodians of their respective collections, the museum curator works primarily in the service of the collection, its research, conservation, and display, while the librarian's function extends to a public responsibility for providing library users direct access to the publications held, which in their majority are mass-media objects rather than precious museological originals.

26 Kretschmann, *Räume* öffnen *sich*, 34.

27 See also, Anna-Sophie Springer, "Reading Rooms Reading Machines," in *Fantasies of the Library*, 69–71.

28 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), 143.

29 See Karen Wonders, *Habitat Dioramas: Illusions of Wilderness in Museums of Natural History* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1993), 81.

30 Paul Lawrence Farber, *Discovering Birds: The Emergence of Ornithology as a Scientific Discipline, 1760–1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 72.

31 On the curatorial qualities of Warburg's library, see again Springer, "Melancholies of the Paginated Mind."

32 Staffan Müller-Wille, "Carl von Linnes Herbarschrank: Zur epistemischen Funktion eines Sammlungsmöbels," in *Sammeln als Wissen*, 23.

33 Ibid., 26.

34 For an in-depth reading on the relationship between the book and the art exhibition, see the essay Anna-Sophie Springer, "Volumes: The Book as Exhibition," *C Magazine* 116 (2012): 36–45.

35 Again, I am using the term "publishing" here in the wider sense of authoring, preparing, and publicizing content through print media rather than limiting the term to the work of a "publishing house."

36 Müller-Wille, "Carl von Linnes Herbarschrank," 36; for a drawing of the cabinet's design see Carl Linnaeus, *Philosophia botanica* (Stockholm, 1751), 291 and fig. XI.

37 Farber, *Discovering Birds*, 7.

38 See Stresemann, *Ornithology*, 53.

39 Brisson, quoted in Farber, *Discovering Birds*, 10, with further references.

40 Spary, "Codes der Leidenschaft," 47.

41 Farber, *Discovering Birds*, 14.

42 Spary, "Codes der Leidenschaft," 47.

43 Ibid., 46.

44 Buffon, quoted in Farber, *Discovering Birds*, 22.

45 Farber, *Discovering Birds*, 24.

46 Robert McCracken Peck, "Preserving Nature for Study and Display," in *Stuffing Birds, Pressing Plants, Shaping Knowledge: Natural History in North America 1730–1860*, vol. 93, part 4, ed. Sue Anne Price (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003), 17.

47 See the description of the event taking place on October 4, 2015: www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/vogelen.

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Scribes, Self-Publishers, Artists: Performing the Book in the Samizdat Writing Scene

Valentina Parisi

> As the scribes will persist, the few readers there are in the world are going to have to change their roles and become scribes themselves.
> More and more countries will be made up of scribes, and more and more factories will be necessary to manufacture paper and ink [...].[1]

In his 1962 short story "End of the World of the End," the Argentine novelist Julio Cortázar suggested that, in a very near future, the world would be invaded by countless anonymous, tireless scribes, who would overflow seas and oceans with a mass of printed matters painstakingly issued by themselves.[2] Cortázar's prophecy has been recently interpreted as a sort of anticipation of the electronic, self-publishing world, initiated by the emergence of cheap and effective free tools for textual production and dissemination. Still, the transformation of readers into scribes/publishers, and the unrestrained verbal proliferation, which in Cortázar's story came as consequence of it, evoke not only some aspects of the present changing media landscape, but also a peculiar phenomenon occurring in the same period as the piece was written. I hereby refer to various, spontaneous practices of self-publishing which come together under the name of samizdat and which flourished in all of the Eastern European countries during late Socialism, coexisting in parallel with the censored press.

Originally started as a way to compensate for the book shortage generated by preventive censorship and to circulate texts, which for various reasons were quite unlikely to be printed in the state-controlled media, samizdat soon developed into the privileged medium of political dissent and, as such, it was incorporated into Cold War narratives. Perceived as a reliable repository of information about what was going on beyond the Iron Curtain ("primary source material in the study of current Soviet affairs,"[3] as Albert Boiter defined it in 1972), as well as a significant symptom of restlessness and instabilities in civil societies, grassroots self-publishing was accorded great attention by Western observers. Yet, from a chronologically distant perspective, samizdat emerges, first of all, as a medium which challenges to a great extent our presuppositions about how a published text should look like. Namely, while it established a parallel level of textual production, samizdat recalled to life aspects of scribal culture which have been marginalized by the invention of the printing press.[4] On the one hand, underground self-publishers questioned the state monopoly on print; on the other one their activity significantly impacted on firmly established concepts of authorship and reception. "Writers write a text, readers read it [...]. This tradition, which dates back to the nineteenth century—a relatively peaceful time, favorable to literary creation—has been now interrupted,"[5] Andrey Sinyavskiy explained in 1977, while participating in a conference on literature and political dissent, organized as a collateral event of the Venice Biennale. The *émigré* writer (who in February 1966 had been sentenced to a seven-year prison term for having published his works abroad) had in mind the overlapping of the author's, reader's, and publisher's function, which often occurred in samizdat practice. Thus, by reproducing a text by typing (and/or photocopying, taking photos of) it, the samizdat "readers/scribes"[6] exceeded the responsibilities traditionally ascribed to the recipient of a literary work, in so far as they established a new edition of the text, designed the external layout of the book, and became engaged in its further dissemination.

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[1] Julio Cortázar, *Cronopios and Famas* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1999), 71.

[2] "[...] much of the water invades many of the lands and there is a new distribution of continents and oceans, and presidents of various republics are replaced by lakes and peninsulas, presidents of other republics see immense territories newly open to their ambitions, etc." Ibid., 72.

[3] See Albert Boiter, "Samizdat: Primary Source Material in the Study of Current Soviet Affairs," *Russian Review* 31, no. 3 (1972): 282–285. On Sovietologists and their approach to samizdat see also Dimitry Pospielovsky, "From Gosizdat to Samizdat and Tamizdat," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 20, no. 1 (1978): 44–62.

[4] Indicative of the "material turn" that has recently occurred in samizdat studies are Ann Komaromi's articles "The Material Existence of Soviet Samizdat," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (2004): 597–618, and "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 4 (2008): 629–667. "Pre-Gutenbergian" implications of self-publishing in the USSR are also at the core of the catalog edited by Sascha Wonders and Günther Hirt (aka Sabine Hänsgen and Georg Witte), *Präprintium: Moskauer Bücher aus dem Samizdat* (Bremen: Temmen, 1998).

In view of this, book history seems to provide a valid conceptual framework for interpreting such a peculiar phenomenon. Memoirs written by Soviet self-publishers provide evidence that in the case of samizdat the many agents (authors, editors, publishers, booksellers, smugglers, readers etc.) identified by the American historian Robert Darnton in order to schematize the circulation of printed items through societies tend to exchange roles and to overlap in their functions.[7] After having received a self-published work, an occasional reader could become not only a regular reader, but also a distributor or publisher of samizdat literature, whereas other readers preferred to skip the tiring phase of manual reproduction and asked professional typists to make a copy for them. As a consequence, a black market of samizdat books was established.[8] Therefore, the "complex human topography," or, in other words, the "whole human comedy"[9] hidden behind publishing that Darnton tried to reconstruct seems to be even more complex when authors and readers become self-appointed publishers.

Given the role played by samizdat in circumventing state censorship and sharing free flows of information, it comes as no surprise that from the 1970s onward an increasing number of visual artists turned to this practice in order to make their own works "public" (although in very narrow circles) or to experiment with the book form. Typewritten journals such as *Arkhiv* (Archive) and *Galereya* (Gallery), both edited in Leningrad, respectively in 1976–1978 and 1981, aspired to present and conceptualize non-conformist art tendencies by publishing reviews of underground exhibitions organized in private apartments, as well as a large photographic documentation of them. As evident by the titles of these journals, paper media played here a compensative function: given the lack of private galleries as well as of institutions collecting and preserving artistic ephemera, self-publications became repositories of otherwise almost invisible art objects.

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[5] Abram Terz (aka Andrey Sinyavskiy), "L'evoluzione letteraria in Russia," in *Letteratura e dissenso nell' Europa dell'Est*, ed. Antonín J. Liehm (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1977), 99, translation mine.

[6] Aleksandr Ginzburg, editor-in-chief of one of the first samizdat literary almanacs, *Sintaksis* (Syntax) (Moscow, 1959–1960, 3 issues) remembers: "As we started publishing, we had no typists, we could only rely on readers-scribes. That's how we defined them: first readers, second readers ... You give them a copy and you ask them to give you back two copies." Aleksandr Ginzburg, "Kogda puskalis' na debyut," in *Russkaya mysl'* (October 1987): 8, translation mine.

[7] Robert Darnton, "What is the history of books?" *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 65–83 and Ibid., "'What is the history of books?' revisited," *Modern Intellectual History* 4, no. 3 (2007): 495–508, 496.

[8] Some activists involved in the diffusion of political samizdat tend to deny the existence of a black market in order to avoid compromising the "heroic" image of Soviet dissent. See Aleksandr Daniel', *Istoki i smysl sovetskogo samizdata*, in *Antologiya samizdata: Nepodtsenzurnaya literatura v SSSR, 1950e–1980e*, vol. 1: *Do 1966 goda*, ed. V. Igrunov (Moskva: Mezhdunarodnyy institut gumanitarnykh-politicheskikh issledovaniy, 2005), 17–33; and interviews with Viktoriya Vol'pina, Lyudmila Alekseyeva and Petr Starchik in Mark Barbarkadze, ed., *Antologiya Samizdata*, accessed August 16, 2015, http://antology.igrunov.ru/stories/.

[9] Darnton, "'What is the history of books?' revisited," 496.

Yet, I think that, from a theoretical standpoint, it is necessary to draw a distinction between self-published documentation of artworks and self-publishing as an artistic strategy, invested with a conscious aesthetic stance. In the latter case, samizdat significantly echoes tendencies which arose in the West in the 1960s and in the 1970s reached—although in an episodic and chaotic way—Soviet unofficial artistic circles as well. I am referring to the emergence of "post-object or post-gallery art,"[10] which contested the commodification of artworks, strived for a reduction of art to linguistic concept, and therefore found in artists' publications a powerful tool for self-expression. This latter point was made clear in 1969 by the gallerist Seth Siegelaub: "For painting and sculpture, where the visual presence—color, scale, size, location—is important to the work, the photograph or verbalization of that work is a bastardization of the art. But when art concerns itself with things not germane to physical presence, its intrinsic 'communicative' value is not altered by its presentation in printed media,"[11] he explained in a talk, referring to the group exhibitions he curated, generally having no existence outside of the catalog. And in 1976 Sol LeWitt echoed his words: "Artist's books are [...] available to all at a low cost. They do not need a special place to be seen. They are not valuable except for the idea they contain [...]. They are works themselves, not reproductions of work. Books are the best medium for many artists working today."[12]

Turning back to the Soviet Union, we cannot help but notice that the state hegemony on arts and the absence of a private art market resulted in practices that partially resemble artistic strategies generated in the West by the increasing dissatisfaction with the artwork as a commercial object. So far scholars have been stressing differences between artists' publications in the West and beyond the Iron Curtain, proceeding from the assumption that in the socialist countries presuppositions triggering the Western artists' growing interest for the book as a medium were largely missing.[13] Yet, obvious discrepancies in the political and socio-economic context should not obscure the fact that samizdat artists' publications display attitudes that fit in the frame of the critical re-thinking of publishing, initiated in the 1960s and now placed at the core of several art-projects which engage concepts central to samizdat practice, like copying, appropriating, and sharing. In this essay, I will approach samizdat artists' publications from this operational viewpoint, highlighting similarities to both co-eval and further experiments with self-publishing in the

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[10] "[T]he kind of art called by the American critics *post-studio, post-object,* or *post-gallery* is namely art of and for the printed page" ("cet art que la critique américaine a appelé *post-studio* ou *post-object* ou encore *post-gallery* est par excellence l'art de la page imprimée"), Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthetique du livre d'artiste, 1960–1980* (Paris: J. M. Place, 1997), 138, translation mine.

[11] Quote in Charles Harrison, "On Exhibition and the World at Large: A Conversation with Seth Siegelaub," in *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battock (New York: Dutton, 1973), 165–173, 168.

[12] Sol LeWitt, "Statement," *Art-Rite* 14 (1976–1977): 10.

[13] See, for instance, Piotr Rypson on the situation in Poland: "Art activities alternative to the existing establishment naturally meant something fundamentally different than in the West: there could have been no discussion or strategy aimed against the art market and its institutions, since no real market of that kind has existed." Piotr Rypson, "Polish Artists' Books in the 1990s and Three Libraries," in *Artists' Publications: Ein Genre und seine Erschließung*, ed. Sigrid Schade and Anne Thurmann-Jajes (Cologne: Salon Verlag, 2009), 80–86, quote at 81–82.

West, as well as the peculiar, historical background which samizdat artists' books should be necessarily placed against, that is grassroots self-publishing performed by the readers themselves.

Copying, Editing & Appropriating

The act of copying was inherent to samizdat from the very beginning. On the one hand, readers-scribes reproduced literary (and non-literary) texts that for several reasons were not available; on the other, original works conceived for underground circulation (and not for submission into the official, censored publishing circuit) generally came out in as many legible copies as the typewriter allowed. Therefore, self-publishing implied the production of surplus of copies (i.e., of a small run that could be distributed to readers for further reproduction and dissemination). Still, while typing, samizdat scribes did not limit themselves to reproducing the text, but established a new, supposedly authoritative, edition of it. At the same time, they created the actual form of the artifact, which is the "fringe" of the typewritten text, by arranging paratextual elements on the front cover and on the title page, as well as inside the book. Given the limited access to mechanical reproduction techniques such as photocopying or photographing, the typewriter was definitely the most popular self-publishing tool. Furthermore, readers' expectations (i.e., their interest in reading a certain work) often determined the choice of the technique used in the reproduction process, as Leonid Zhmud' remembers: "I incessantly received books, but sooner or later I had to give them back and I couldn't bear it. Consequently, I started to reproduce them by Xerox or I gave them to typists. Nabokov and Platonov passed through the typewriter, because typists loved them, while Solzhenitsyn and Zinov'ev would end up in the Xerox."[14]

This example reflects quite well the private character and the emotional significance self-publishing was generally invested with. This brought about a fetishization of the samizdat copy, which in its own turn descended, of course, from all the difficulties that self-publishers had to face in order to obtain the scarcely attainable original text. *Ex libris* designed *ad hoc* for private collections of typewritten books often emphasized all risks related to self-publishing, as evident in the ones that identify samizdat copies belonging to Juriy Ivanovich Abyzov and to Lev Mikhaylovich Turchinskiy [fig.1]. In both vignettes samizdat bibliophiles are represented as carrying out their task while struggling against troubled waters—a metaphor that represents their attempt to save forgotten writers from the oblivion of the past despite ideological pressure and political repressions. Significantly, in Turchinskiy's *ex libris* the self-publisher is compared to a man dressed like an intellectual who tows a boat full of volumes of forbidden authors, whose names are written on the spines. Self-publishing was definitely a hard job; nevertheless it allowed one to enjoy reading extremely rare books in a comfortable, intimate, domestic atmosphere—as Natal'ya Isayevna Fel'dman-Konrad's *ex libris* seemed to suggest.

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[14] Leonid Zhmud', "Studenty-istoriki mezhdu ofitsiozom i 'liberal'noy' naukoy," *Zvezda* 8 (1998): 205.

This peculiar *pathos*—inspired by the belief that only samizdat could help Russian intellectuals in re-appropriating literary heritage of the 1920s–30s—re-emerged in what one would call typewritten (or even handwritten) "reprints" of hardly attainable pre-revolutionary or *émigré* editions. In some cases samizdat scribes reproduced in painstaking detail all paratextual elements of the typographical book that they were copying, including even those that were not pertinent to the new, self-published edition, as, for instance, the name of the artist who designed the original cover, or the address of the publishing house. This kind of mimicry—probably instigated by the desire to prove that the copy was made on the basis of the original edition and not from another samizdat copy—lead to sometimes paradoxical effects as in the case of Abyzov's handwritten copy of *Nevod"* (Fishnet), an anthology of Russian poets based in Berlin, which had come out in April 1933. Abyzov not only carefully reproduced the design of the cover [fig. 2, 3], but also appropriated the logo of the *émigré* publishing house Slovo (Word) and the impressum [fig. 4]. This case seems far from being unique. The samizdat collection at the Research Centre for East European Studies in Bremen provides many other striking examples of "non-printed reprints," for instance Marina Tsvetaeva's collected works in nine typewritten volumes, reproduced by Valentin Fedorovich Tsvetkov in Riga between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s on the basis of both pre-revolutionary and *émigré* editions, or countless typewritten collections of Nikolay Gumilëv's poetry [fig. 5, 6].

Therefore, one could infer that, rather than doing away with the traditional typographic book structure, many self-publishers tended to ideally reinforce it, by reproducing it with the greatest care. Still, this veneration for individual authorship, as fixed and perpetuated by typography should not obliterate the circumstance that viral copying and uncontrolled spreading of new textual versions, irrespective of the reliability of the primary source, was the rule for the Soviet self-publishers. Taken as a whole, the samizdat circuit resembles Western experiments such as the Underground Press Syndicate, a network of countercultural newspapers and magazines, founded in the USA in 1966. Underground publishers agreed on the principle that any member of the network was allowed "to reprint, free of charge, the contents of any other member,"[15] in order to reach a broader readership. Similarly, textual dissemination in the samizdat circuit was virtually unrestrained and not subject to legal restrictions even if no common agreement between self-publishers and/or authors was ever reached or made explicit. Samizdat journals simply appropriated any work they deemed worthy of being published or re-published; as a consequence, texts were reproduced and circulated with only the implied (but rarely explicit) consent of the authors. Strange as it may seem, the concern about the unlimited freedom to copy and assemble any material led to the emergence of a samizdat copyright. In July 1983, the typewritten journal

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[15] Alessandro Ludovico, *Post-Digital Print. The Mutation of Publishing since 1984* (Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2012), 42.

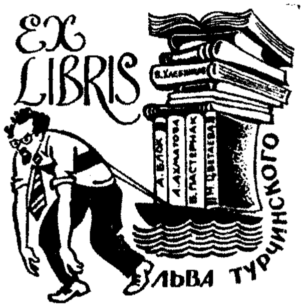
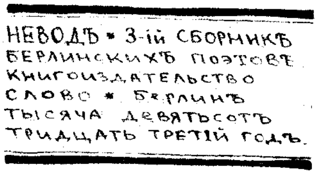


Fig. 1.



НЕВОДЪ * 3-iй СБОРНИКЪ
БЕРЛИНСКИХЪ ПОЭТОВЪ
КНИГОИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
СЛОВО * БЕРЛИНЪ
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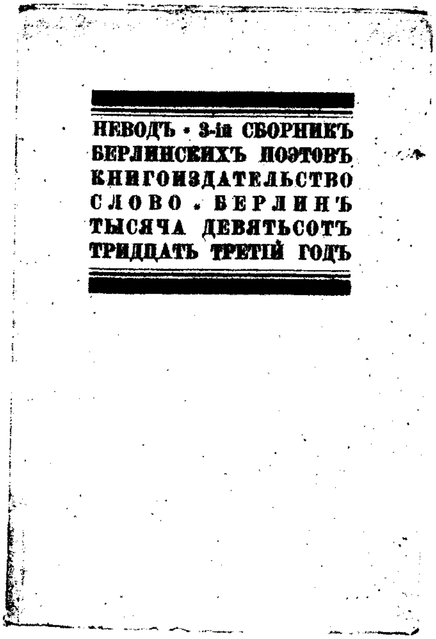
ТРИДЦАТЬ ТРЕТIЙ ГОДЪ.

Fig. 3.



НЕВОДЪ • 3-iя СБОРНИКЪ
БЕРЛИНСКИХЪ ПОЭТОВЪ
КНИГОИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
СЛОВО • БЕРЛИНЪ
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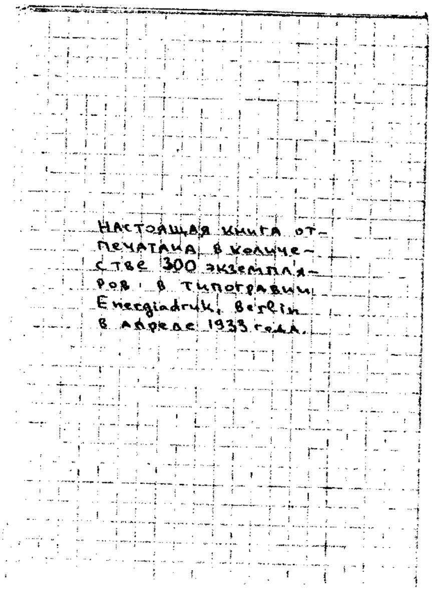
ТРИДЦАТЬ ТРЕТIЙ ГОДЪ

Fig. 2.



Настоящая книга отпечатана в количестве 300 экземпляров в типографии Energiadruk, Berlin в апреле 1933 года.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 1. Lev Mikhaylovich Turchinskiy's *ex libris* from his self-published anthology *Vospominaniya. Pis'ma* (Recollections. Letters) (Moscow region: 1970s). FSO 01-091 (Turčinskij), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Fig. 2. *Nevod". 3-iy sbornik berlinskikh poetov* (Fishnet) (Berlin: Knigoizdatel'stvo Slovo, 1933), cover.

Fig. 3. *Nevod". 3-iy sbornik berlinskikh poetov* (Fishnet), samizdat copy made by Juriy Ivanovich Abyzov, Riga, cover. FSO 01-117/2 (Abyzov), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Fig. 4. *Nevod". 3-iy sbornik berlinskikh poetov* (Fishnet), samizdat copy made by Juriy Ivanovich Abyzov, Riga, imprint: "This book has been printed in an edition of 300 copies by Energiadruk, Berlin, in April 1933." FSO 01-117/2 (Abyzov), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Transponans released, in its seventeenth issue, some unpublished materials by avant-garde artists thanks to the collaboration with the art historian Nikolay Khardzhiev, who as a young man in the 1930s befriended leading members of the Russian avant-garde and preserved their manuscripts long after their works were banned as subversively bourgeois. In view of the artistic and historical value of such texts—unpublished poems by Aleksey Kruchёnykh and Kazimir Malevich—*Transponans* editors Sergey Sigov and Anna Tarshis decided to prevent readers from copying them by specifying in a notice "perepechatka zapreshaet'sya" (reproduction is forbidden). Moreover, they appropriated the copyright on the materials together with Khardzhiev by adding a curious typewritten copyright symbol [fig. 7].[16]

Although Sigov and Tarshis did not expect any financial return from this purely formal ownership of rights, their act introduced a bias in self-publishing: at that time it was generally assumed that readers-scribes had to mention the title of the journal they had copied texts from,[17] but nobody had yet tried to forbid the further reproduction and dissemination of a self-published text. Before Khardzhiev, Sigov, and Tarshis started using it, the copyright symbol had already appeared in the colophon of the famous typewritten literary almanac *Metropol'* edited by Vasiliy Aksёnov, Andrey Bitov, Viktor Yerofeyev, Fazil' Iskander, and Yevgeniy Popov in Moscow in 1979 [fig. 8]. The editors did not introduce any restriction on copying; they simply gave instructions on how the manuscript had to be printed (e.g., no integrations or shortenings are allowed). It is very likely that such a warning was addressed to Russian-language publishers abroad. Another striking example is the hand-written copyright symbol placed by the poet Yury Kublanovsky on the colophon of a self-published copy of his poems [fig. 9]. It is quite unlikely that their warning could prevent anybody from copying; still, their attempt to reassert the principle of intellectual property and copyrighted distribution in a context where copying, reassembling, and sharing was the rule is highly indicative of increasing authors' dissatisfaction with their inability to supervise samizdat publishing and to exert control over their own work. Of course, they did not charge samizdat publishers with piracy crime or copyright infringement; rather they claimed the right to have their works circulating *only* in a form which was revised and approved by themselves. For example, in 1990 Joseph Brodsky protested against the editors of the Leningrad samizdat journal *Sumerki* (Twilight), as they published an unauthorized translation of his English essay "In a Room and a Half."[18] In an editorial note, *Sumerki* editor Aleksandr Novakovskiy commented bitterly: "After issuing the first run of 'Sumerki' n. 8, we heard that Joseph Brodsky had categorically prohibited the publication of his English text in Russia [...]. We express our apologies to Joseph Brodsky.

[16] On Khardzhiev's criticism of self-publishing see Nadezhda Mandel'shtam: "Khardzhiev was a sworn enemy of the 'parallel literature' and used to blame me and Anna Andreyevna (Akhmatova) for helping readers to circulate copies of O. M. (Osip Mandel'shtam and for contributing to journal publications, usually based on those very copies and, consequently, full of mistakes," Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Vospominaniya. Kniga tret'ya* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1987), 108, translation mine.

[17] For example, in 1973 the typewritten journal *Veche* (Assembly) (Aleksandrov) published the notice: "When copying texts, please mention the journal 'Veche,'" while in 1983 "Molchanie's editors (Leningrad) pointed out: 'Copying original texts is allowed only by mentioning M.'"

[18] First published in the *New York Review* on February 27, 1986.

We do hope that the status of our journal will prevent him from charging us with piracy crime."[19]

In sum, being a do-it-yourself tool for circumventing censorship, Soviet samizdat could not help but rely massively on readers' initiative; consequently, it bypassed not only state surveillance on printed contents, but also the privileged relationship between author and publisher. In taking over the role of publishers, readers-scribes opened up a new "writing scene"[20] where, basically, no legal restrictions or copyright laws prevented anybody from assembling, dissembling, and reassembling texts at his/her disposal. Rather than external regulation, a kind of interiorized ethics of copying and the feeling of being responsible for the future "survival"[21] of forgotten works written by often repressed authors instilled in self-publishers a sort of veneration of the (supposedly) authoritative copy-text. This resulted in a conservative attitude toward the paratextual fringe which is well reflected by what I would call "samizdat reprints." Bizarre as it may sound, censorship and self-publishing *de facto* conjured in establishing a territory of intellectual commons in the literary and artistic sphere. On the one hand, preventive censorship excluded a large number of authors from copyrighted reproduction by declaring them not eligible to publish in the state-controlled media. On the other, self-publishers strived to save these authors from oblivion or invisibility in so far as they tried to grant their works with the widest and most unrestricted circulation possible. The awe inspired by the mythologization of repressed authors of the past as well as solidarity toward contemporary outsiders generally made "copy and paste" experiments reproachable, although possible. At the same time, the unprecedented freedom inherent in this grassroots' practice also generated its discontents as evident from Joseph Brodsky's reaction to *Sumerki* publication.

Make it (Il)legible

How do all these elements come into the picture if we turn our attention to samizdat artists' publications? To what extend were artists' publications issued in the context of Soviet self-publishing affected by the medial specificities of samizdat production that we have tried to describe? To what degree did they respond to the widespread appraisal of the book as the most appropriate medium for disseminating artistic ideas—considering that many Soviet artists who engaged self-publishing as an artistic practice were inspired by new trends coming from the West? As the exhibition "Russian samizdat art," curated by Rimma Gerlovina and Valeriy Gerlovin at

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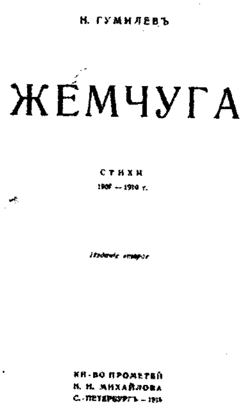
[19] Aleksandr Novakovskiy, [editorial note], *Sumerki*, 8 (1990), unpag. FSO 01-53, Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies. Translation mine.

[20] I refer here to the concept of *Schreibszene* introduced by Rüdiger Campe in order to define the historically and individually constituted interrelation of semantics, instrumentality (technology of writing) and bodily gesture. See Rüdiger Campe, "Die Schreibszene, Schreiben," in *Paradoxien, Dissonanzen, Zusammenbrüche. Situationen offener Epistemologie*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 759–772.

[21] The "survival of a bibliographical document" is a notion that Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker introduced in their alternative schema to Darnton's "communication circuit" by taking into account reworking of texts through new editions, translations, and the changing contexts both of reading and of literature in general. Thomas R. Adams and N. Barker, "A New Model for the Study of the Book," in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*, ed. N. Barker (London: British Library, 1993), 5–31, 13.


Н. ГУМИЛЕВЪ

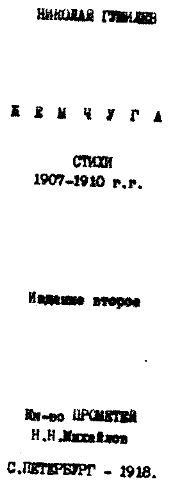
ЖЕМЧУГА

СТИХИ
1907 — 1910 г.

Изданіе второе

КН-ВО ПРОМЕТЕЙ
Н. Н. МИХАЙЛОВА
С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ — 1918

Fig. 5.


НИКОЛАЙ ГУМИЛЕВ

ЖЕМЧУГА

СТИХИ
1907-1910 г.г.

Издание второе

Кн-во ПРОМЕТЕЙ
Н.Н.Михайлов

С.ПЕТЕРБУРГ - 1918.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 5. Nikolay Gumilëv, *Zhemchuga. Stikhi 1907–1910 g.* (Pearl. Poems) (Sankt-Peterburg: Kn. Prometey N. N. Mikhaylova, ²1918), front page.
Fig. 6. Nikolay Gumilëv, *Zhemchuga. Stikhi 1907–1910 g.* (Pearl. Poems), samizdat copy made by an unknown reader, front page. FSO 01-5/2.18, Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

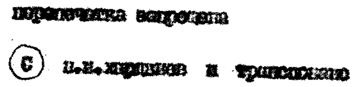


Fig. 7.

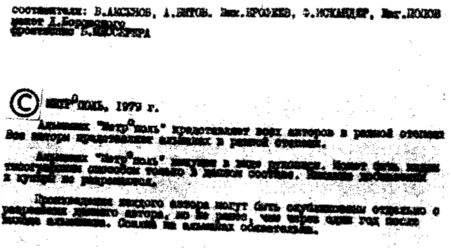


Fig. 8.

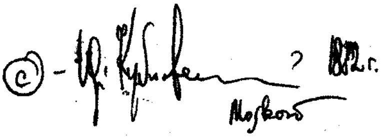


Fig. 9.

Fig. 7. Copyright symbol from the samizdat journal *Transponans* (Eysk), 17 (July 1983): "Reproduction is forbidden. © N.N. Khardzhiev and Transponans." FSO 01-37 (Ehrl), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.
Fig. 8. Copyright symbol from the samizdat almanac *Metropol'* (Moscow, 1979): "Ed. by V. Aksënov, A. Bitov, V. Yerofeyev, F. Iskander, Ye. Popov. Design by D. Borovskiy. Front page by B. Messerer. © Metropol', 1979. [...] The almanac 'Metropol'' is published in manuscript form. It may be printed and published only in the given compilation. Additions and shortening are not permitted. Works of single authors may be published separately with permission of the respective author, but not earlier than one year after the almanac's publication. A reference to the almanac is obligatory." FSO 01-103 (Babënyshevy), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.
Fig. 9. Handwritten copyright symbol from Yury Kublanovsky's self-published book *Poems* (Moscow, 1982). FSO 01-30.117 (Poljakova), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Franklin Furnace in New York in 1982 made clear,[22] self-publishing (obviously in its own "authorial" version),[23] during Brezhnev's "stagnation," had represented an invaluable tool for visual artists to experiment with the "bookwork" form and document their own creative practice in a free, uncensored way. Yet, one should not forget that the boundaries between the two attitudes—creating and archiving—were extremely permeable. On the one hand, the ever increasing institutionalization of self-publishing in the 1970s led to a strong tendency toward critical self-reflection and deconstruction. As Sabine Hänsgen and Georg Witte remarked, in several samizdat bookworks, the object of desacralization was not necessarily the typographical book, issued by the State, but rather the samizdat typewritten copy itself,[24] if not, I would add, the whole "reading scene" connected to self-publishing.

In this regard, precluding legibility or, on the contrary, making legible extremely unreadable or self-referential texts, were the most obvious devices in order to deconstruct samizdat practices and hint at the fetishization of the self-published, small run editions, distributed in narrow underground circles. Under a conceptual viewpoint, self-critical samizdat bookworks do not substantially differ from similar Western experiments that polemically engaged themselves with the tradition of the bibliophilic book production. Still, playing with legibility/readability is invested here with some additional meanings, since in the context of samizdat legibility could by no means be taken for granted as in the case of printed items. It was rather the opposite: as many self-publishers stated, evanescent, almost illegible typescripts were the rule, for scribes tended to reproduce a text by means of carbon paper in as many copies as possible.

In this perspective, the typewritten *Minibooks* created by Dmitriy Aleksandrovich Prigov throughout the 1970s can be regarded as irreverent facsimile copies of samizdat books, in so far as they explore all the possible ways of frustrating readers' expectations by intentionally making the act of reading extremely demanding (in the series *Vyrvannye, vydrannye, vybroshennye, izmyatye, istertye i porugannye stikhi* (Selected, tear-out, discarded, crumpled, abraded and insulted poems, [fig.10]), if not impossible (in *Grobik otrinutykh stikhov* (Little grave for refused poems). Prigov turned the self-published book into a device "for not reading" (to quote the title of his conversation with Vadim Zakharov in 1993)[25] by mimicking the paratextual elements of a "typical" samizdat booklet, whereas he drastically reduced the textual content to the linguistic description of the interiorized acts that accompany reading—that is, opening the book, turning pages, closing the book, and so on. For example, the verbal content of *Prosto kniga* (Simply a book, 1977) tautologically adheres to the operations that readers are expected to perform in a mechanical way: "Turn the page/turn the next page/turn one more page/turn the last page/the end."[26] In other terms, readers' gestures coincide with the imperatives they gradually discover, in so far as their hands instinctively anticipate the commands they are about to read.

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[22] See the catalog edited by John E. Bowlt and Charles Doria, *Russian Samizdat Art* (New York: Locker&Owens, 1986).

[23] The indication "authorial samizdat" (evidently used in opposition to copies issued by readers-scribes) appeared, for example, on Vladimir Aleynikov's self-published volumes belonging to Mikhail Grobman. FSO 01-74, Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

[24] See Sascha Wonders and Günther Hirt, "Einführung," in *Präprintium*, 8–40, 34.

[25] Dmitriy Aleksandrovich Prigov, "Kniga kak sposob nechitaniya. Beseda s izdatelem, sostoyavshayasya v yanvare 1993 goda v gorode Kel'ne. S preduvledomleniem," *Pastor* 3 (1993), later re-published in *Pastor: Sbornik izbrannykh materialov, opublikovannykh v zhurnale "Pastor" 1992–2001* (Vologda: German Titov, 2009), 141–152.

Therefore, from a conceptual standpoint, Prigov's *Minibook* would apparently have a great deal in common with similar "tautological" bookworks which engage the structural elements of the book. Look, for instance, at George Brecht's *Book* (1972), where single paratextual details such as the author's name, title, and publisher are reported on a slipcase in the form of adhesive labels and accompanied by printed statements, such as: "This is the title page," "This is ...," etc. Still, Prigov's *Prosto kniga* radically differs from it in force of its evident imperative, thus performative character, for it openly addresses the reader in order to be performed, i.e., realized in all its possibilities. The constant appeal to the readership—even when an actual reproduction of the typewritten text would seem highly unlikely—represents, I would say, one of the distinctive features of samizdat artists' publications, and is generally accompanied by a tendency to fragment the book form and, consequently, to emphasize the individual interaction with single carriers of meaning.

This kind of strategy is displayed by Lev Rubinshteyn's poetic works written on library file cards. Look for instance at *Programma sovmestnykh perezhivaniy* (*A Program of Shared Tribulations*, 1981), a piece which deconstructed one of the most widespread rituals in underground circles, that is the collective, silent "consumption" of a single self-published work by several persons who (at night, generally) gathered together and passed to each other every single sheet, in order to allow as many people as possible to share the reading experience.[27] According to conceptual reductionism, Rubinshteyn turned this ritual into an empty act through a series of self-referential reflections about the "present moment," i.e., the actual time when the reading took place. As a result, his piece intentionally frustrated readers' expectations about the appearance of a "real," non-tautological text:

> "*after reading, please pass this to a friend*
>
> 1
>
> Are we ready for shared tribulations?
>
> 2
>
> If we are, then good.
>
> If not, readiness will come in its own good time.
>
> 3
>
> At this moment we are interested only in this moment,
>
> and also everything that's connected with it.
>
> 4
>
> As we know, much is connected to this moment.
>
> 5
>
> Let's combine our efforts to define this moment most accurately.
>
> 6
>
> Let's apply a maximum effort for the most precise self-fixation
>
> of each person in the context of this moment. [...]"[28]

[26] Dmitriy Aleksandrovich Prigov, *Prosto kniga* (Moscow: samizdat, 1977).

[27] See interviews with Viktoriya Vol'pina and Natal'ya Sadomskaya in Barbarkadze, *Antologiya Samizdata*.

[28] Lev Rubinstein, *A Program of Shared Tribulations*, in *Compleat Catalogue of Comedic Novelties* (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2014), 324–329, 325.

Again, the linguistic content of the self-published work is drastically confined to the description of the operations performed by the readers in order to make possible its consumption in a particular writing scene. At the same time, Rubinshteyn's conceptual staging of reading is an example of the particular performative nature of the samizdat text, conceived not in order to appear in print, but rather—as the underground poet Mikhail Yeremin pointed out—to be "realized"[29] in different ways: copied by the readers and/or read before an audience, appropriated, and slandered by the official press, quoted and/or printed by Western and/or *émigré* publishers, allowed to survive thanks to different kind of archives (from KGB's one to unofficial archival projects). This latter aspect, related to self-documentation and preservation, became crucial by the end of 1970s, as a large number of artists emigrated, and a new generation of young artists entered the scene. These two phenomena combined conjured in initiating a series of artists' samizdat publications where archiving purposes and performative elements are often closely intertwined.

Make It Public

In this respect, it is remarkable that, while underground artists turned to samizdat to document their works, they also began to explore it as a medium in its own right, creating artworks expressly for typewritten editions. This twofold approach toward self-publishing is well reflected by the Moscow typewritten art magazine *Metki novoy zhivopisi* (Marking the new painting), edited by Vladimir Petrov and Vitaliy Gribkov between 1975 and 1979. Beside publishing theoretical contributions on unofficial art, the editors turned their journal into a collective platform for ephemeral, *hic et nunc* experiments, by "yielding the floor" to visual artists and asking them to conceive the new issue as a whole. This happened on two different occasions, namely in 1979, as the young members of the group Mukhomory (Toadstools) re-designed *Metki* #8 in the spirit of the provocative, colorful aesthetics which characterized their handwritten books [fig.11]. Three years earlier, on March 3rd, 1976, Andrey Monastyrskiy, Nikita Alekseyev, and Lev Rubinshteyn—who were about to conceive *Poyavlenie* (Appearance), the first "action" of the Kollektivnye deystviya (Collective Actions) group—had transformed the editing of *Metki* #3 in a one-day performance: instead of publishing the expected documentation related to their artworks, they preferred to turn the journal into a conceptual piece, by providing a brief linguistic description of their minimalistic interventions on it, accompanied by the precise timing of when they took place. For instance, Rubinshteyn commented: "Since Nikita Alekseyev likes to soften everything, he decided to cut away all corners with scissors and to make them round. March 3rd, 1976, 7 PM." After a while (7:07 PM) Monastyrskiy drew small crosses on every corner with a red pencil, and so on.[30]

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[29] D. Sukhovey, *"Mne tyazhelo ottogo, chto ja deystvitel'no ostal'sya odin"* accessed August 16, 2015, http://www.colta.ru/articles/literature/1689.

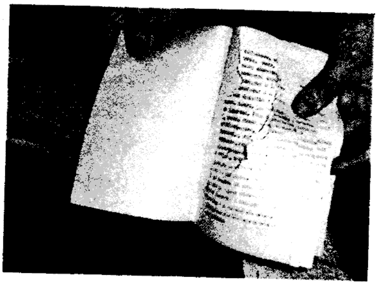

Fig. 10.

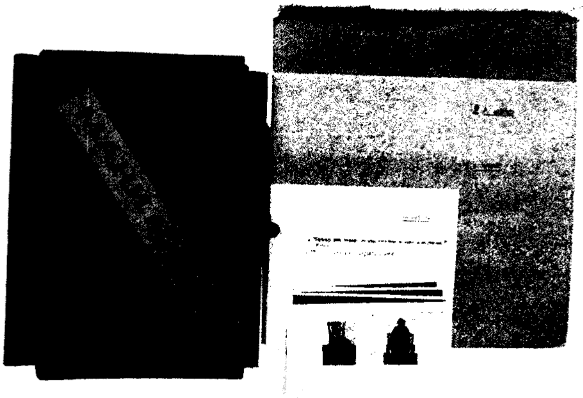

Fig. 12.

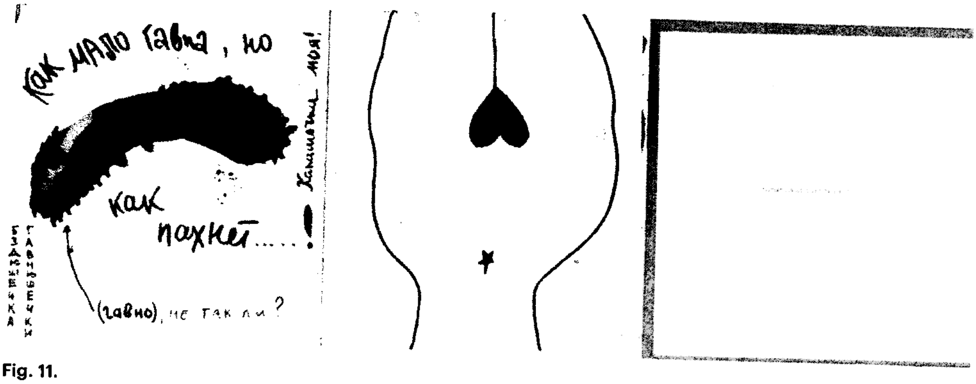
Так мало гавна, но
как
пахнет.....!
(гавно), не так ли?

Fig. 11.

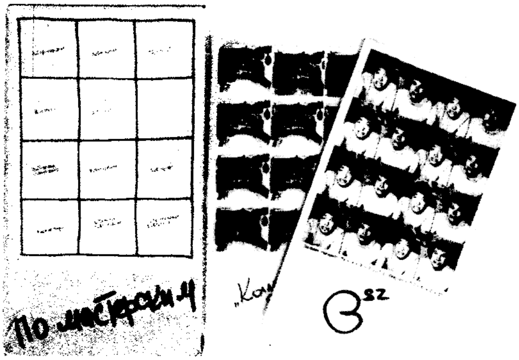

Fig. 13.

Fig. 10. D. A. Prigov, *Vyrvannye, vydrannye, vybroshennye, izmyatye, istertye i porugannye stikhi* (Selected, tear-out, discarded, crumpled, abraded and insulted poems) (Moscow, 1970s). Artist's collection. © The Dmitry Prigov International Foundation, 2015.

Fig. 11. Samizdat journal *Metki novoy zhivopisi* (Marking the new painting), ed. V. Petrov and V. Gribkov, 8 (1979), Moscow, drawings by the group Mukhomory (Toadstools). FSO 01-076 (V. M. Petrov, V. S. Gribkov and L. A. Melamid), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Fig. 12. *MANI* (Moscow Archive of New Art), 4 (1982), ed. N. Abalakova and A. Zhigalov, Moscow. FSO 01-066 (MANI), Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Fig. 13. *Po masterskim* (Across the ateliers), (winter/summer 1983/1984), ed. G. Kizeval'ter and V. Zakharov, Moscow. Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies.

Whereas the *Metki* issues released by artists exemplify the strong performative character samizdat bookworks were generally invested with, some other underground artists' publications were rather centered on the blurring borders between creating and documenting, performing and archiving. This is the case of the probably most ambitious self-publishing project initiated by Moscow underground artists: I refer to four *MANI Files* (Moscow Archive of New Art) edited between February 1981 and 1982 in five copies and distributed to a few colleagues and friends. Each folder contained up to forty-four envelopes, each of them devoted to one participant [fig.12]. Artists were requested to insert some pictures or texts in their personal envelopes in order to present their activity, thus to make it public—although in a very narrow circle. This elementary, open-ended schema inspired a large range of solutions, reflecting different ideas about how the self-published archive should look like. For instance, Oleg Vasil'ev and Erik Bulatov provided traditional photographic reproductions of their paintings, whereas Ilya Kabakov, Igor' Makharevich, Ivan Chuykov and Boris Orlov focused on the contextual "frame," by taking pictures of their artworks on the background of their ateliers. Nevertheless, all the aforementioned artists conceived the *MANI* archive as, basically, a self-made substitute for a typographic catalog. This attitude was also shared by Francisco Infante, who—quite paradoxically—inserted in his folder the printed documentation of one of his official exhibitions, held at the House of Scientists.

On the contrary, other contributions radically put in discussion the concept of the archive as a catalog, an inventory of artworks existing *outside* the archive itself. Interestingly, the four *MANI* issues contained an ever-increasing number of oeuvres explicitly conceived for the folder, that is not a documentation of external, autonomous artworks, but artworks which were consciously focused on the eponymous "format" of the envelope,[31] like for instance the untitled work included by the group SZ (Viktor Skersis & Vadim Zakharov) in *MANI* #4, the playful series of envelopes created by the duo Leonid Tishkov/Nikolay Kozlov (#3), or the series *Zhivopis'* (Painting) by Mikhail Roshal' and Gennadiy Donskoy (#2), based on a tautological equivalence between concepts expressed in titles and their material realization, as exemplified by *Kholst, lishennyj devstvennosti* (A canvas deprived of its virginity) and *Kholst, maslo* (Canvas, oil). Again, artists tended to frustrate viewers' expectations, by denying them access to what the envelope could potentially contain, as in the case of Donskoy's *Samotsenzura* (Self-censorship, #4), or Rubinshteyn's tautological *Konvert* (Envelope, #3).

[30] It is worth adding that self-reference and playful minimalism were also the main characteristics of the performance *Poyavlenie* (Appearance), which took place on March 13, 1976, just ten days after *Metki* collective editing. Here participants were invited to reach by railway a field of snow outside Moscow in order to attend the "appearance" of one member of the group (not followed by any other substantial event) and to receive a certificate in order to prove their participation in the action. Here white field and white paper become almost interchangeable carriers of meaning, which can alternatively host artists' tautological, slightly absurd interventions.

[31] Interestingly, Anne Mœglin-Delcroix referring to Joseph Kosuth's *Notebook on Water* (New York: Multiples, 1970), contrasted envelope to book, by declaring the former "a format without form," yet characterized by a higher degree of indifferentiation and abstractness (A. Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique*, 147). Bookworks made out of envelopes were widespread in the Moscow Conceptual circle and eventually reached America, as Gerlovina and Gerlovin adopted the *MANI* format for the journal *Kolkhoz* they edited in New York with Vagrich Bakhchanyan, see http://www.gerlovin.com/samizdat.htm, accessed August 16, 2015.

At the same time, the spontaneous spirit of the *MANI* archive allowed a few participants to take some ironic distance from the very concept of this underground samizdat publication itself, that is providing a trustworthy image of the Moscow unofficial art scene. In June 1981, Viktor Skersis and Vadim Zakharov inserted into the fourth issue of *MANI* the contributions of some non-existing, imaginary artists, namely I. Volodin, E. Volodina, E. Shnitser, whose works, in a way, looked like a parody of both Conceptualism and Sots art. On the one hand, their ironical attempt to put into question the very reliability of the documentation they were providing reflects the continuity of an already well-established tendency toward mystification within the Moscow art scene.[32] On the other hand, it reflects an increasing interest in the context (real or potential) artists would be able to create around their oeuvre.

Whereas *MANI* incarnates a powerful inclination toward self-presentation, another artists' publication initiated in the same Moscow circle strived for self-reflection and confrontation among the artists through the form of the interview. The samizdat book *Po masterskim* (Across the ateliers, winter 1983/summer 1984, 12 copies [fig. 13]), realized by Vadim Zakharov and Georgiy Kizeval'ter, was based on the presupposition that the few texts and pictures included in the *MANI* archive were not enough to illuminate artists' positions. Shifting the attention from the work itself to the context and trying to describe from an objective viewpoint the underground scene to which he belonged, Zakharov affirmed the necessity to take some distance from the "obvious" support (if not reciprocal flattering) which characterized the communication among non-conformist artists and to initiate a critical assessment that at that point was still largely missing. At the same time, being a sort of "action book" carried out across the Moscow ateliers, *Po masterskim* reflects not only the entanglement of documentation and performativity in samizdat artists' publications, but also the possibility of integrating the editor/publisher function within one's own artistic practice, as Zakharov eventually did, initiating the Pastor Zond editions in Cologne in the post-Soviet (and post-samizdat) decade.[33]

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[32] As already expressed by Vitaliy Komar and Aleksandr Melamid, who in 1973 "discovered" the forgotten painters Nikolay Buchumov and Apelles Zyablov.

[33] I would like to thank Maria Klassen (Archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies) and Roberta Sala (State University Turin) for generously providing information and images to support this essay.

Notes

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No to Mass Circulation:

Publishing in the Context of an Aesthetics of the Relationships in Post-Samizdat

Vadim Zakharov / Annette Gilbert

ANNETTE GILBERT: Much has been said about the artistic microcosm on the periphery of the official and semi-official culture, a microcosm that was crucial for the development of samizdat and Moscow Conceptualism. The poet Vsevolod Nekrasov described one of the very first of these circles, the Lianozovo Group, as "something which was unprecedented in 1958, private space with an art gallery accessible to the public. A small room in a shed, open to everyone. A freely accessible zone, as we would say today. A visiting room. Come, if you want!" One could understand the art and literature as well as the publications that emerged from these contexts as a continuation of open conversations that are private and yet totally open and accessible to other interested parties as well. In this context, Ekaterina Degot once put forward the thesis that samizdat's orientation was essentially on human relationships and not on a product: "This state of affairs dramatically alters the status of a work of art. It does not possess any sort of self-contained value; instead, it constructs a system of interactions." Do you see things in a similar light? How have the forms of assembly and communication structures of these unofficial circles affected, in your own experience, the development of an adequate publication format?

VADIM ZAKHAROV: Yes, the established networks of relationships in these private spaces and the culture of dialogue that was developed there were prerequisites for everything that followed. In fact, only those people for whom conversation is a mode of existence were invited. Since the publications developed from conversations and human relationships, they acquired an intimate potency that would have been missing from the work in contexts like an exhibition. The reader is morphed into a conversation partner, a confidant in these publications. The book is no longer merely a thing—one cannot set it aside at any arbitrary moment. It becomes a concrete situation that sucks the reader into it. The publications might even be said to have the status of a token of friendship.

AG: A kind of parallel universe with its own system of publications developed in samizdat that was independent of the official literature and art. How exactly did this system function? At which moment, for example, was something understood as being published?

VZ: According to Soviet legislation, the publication of more than five copies of a text was illegal. Perhaps this is why the magic number for us was five. But five—that is also the number of carbon copies a typewriter can produce, although the last copy is barely legible. You could say something was published with five copies. So, for example, five copies were always made of the famous *MANI Files (Papki MANI)*. It was a collection of twenty-two

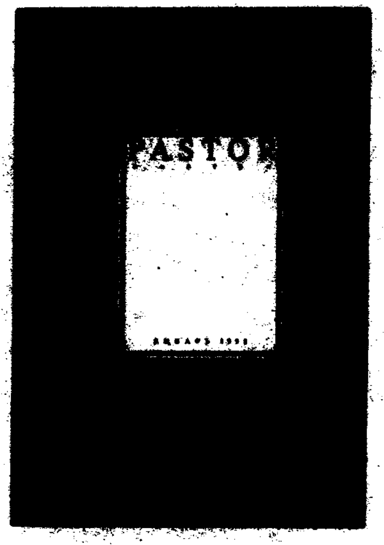

Fig. 1. *Pastor*, ed. Pastor Zond, 1 (January 1992), cover. Photo: Vadim Zakharov.

to forty-four envelopes with photos, drawings, etc. by a single artist. For all intents and purposes it was a complete exhibition. *MANI Files* were the first substantial collective publication of the Moscow samizdat, even if only five copies were made. There were four issues, if one wants to call it that, in total. I also assembled one issue, the second, together with Viktor Skersis.[1]

AG: How were these files circulated?

VZ: The method of distribution was mostly primitive: after becoming familiar with the content of a *MANI File*, you passed it on to the next person, for the most part to friends and artist colleagues. In doing so, we catered to different generations of the older avant-garde, the so-called Shestidesyatniki (Sixties), as well as the youth, so that the books circulated in various microcosms. As soon as we completed the five copies and brought them into circulation, they were, for us, finished and released, that is, published.

AG: Crucial for the act of "publishing" was then the moment a handful of copies began to circulate, even if these only passed from hand to hand and in very small circles?

VZ: Yes, the things had to "function." In retrospect it has sometimes been said that there were five *MANI Files*. But that simply isn't true. The story behind the fifth issue is unclear. Probably the artist group Mukhomory (Toadstools) worked on its production but never finished. The fifth issue was never put into circulation. Thus this issue never fulfilled its function, it didn't "function." In my view, there is no fifth issue in the strict sense, there is only the preliminary work on one but it was never published. There were many things during

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[1] Called into existence by Andrey Monastyrskiy in 1981. *Papki MANI* (i.e. "Moskovskiy Arkhiv Novogo Iskusstva," Moscow Archive of New Art) can be seen in the samizdat collection at the Research Centre for East European Studies in Bremen. See also Valentina Parisi, *Scribes, Self-Publishers, Artists. Performing the Book in Samizdat Writing Scene* in this volume.

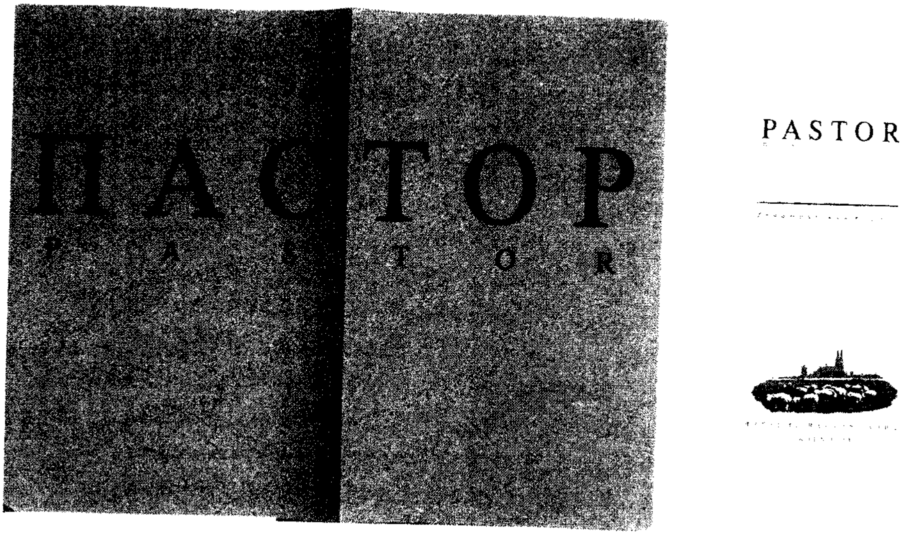

Fig. 2. *Pastor*, ed. Pastor Zond, 1 (January 1992), title page. Photo: Vadim Zakharov.

this time that were undertaken in this sense but which were never finished, you could say: that were never published.

AG: Censorship, which was one of the main reasons for the formation of samizdat, dissolved with Perestroika. Nevertheless, you stayed true to the samizdat tradition when you founded the magazine *Pastor* and the publishing house Pastor Zond Edition. Why?

VZ: The dilemma is no longer political today, but rather economic. But that isn't the main reason why I began publishing things myself without utilizing the new possibilities of production after Perestroika. In a certain sense, I have cultivated the production methods of samizdat. Not out of pure nostalgia but also not out of a lack of funds, although that has naturally played a role. I was convinced by the necessity, indeed, by the lack of alternatives of publishing in this manner—particularly at a time in which you could suddenly publish and distribute anything you wanted. In 1992 I founded the magazine *Pastor*, which was the magazine for Moscow Conceptualism [fig. 1, 2], and the publishing house Pastor Zond Edition in Cologne. This occurred at a time when I was suddenly rediscovering myself as an artist in the West and my whole artistic context from Russia had also suddenly relocated to the West. The magazine was my attempt to occupy a territory that belongs to me and to save our old world that was in danger of vanishing in the Diaspora. As such, I provided the platform that, incidentally, was also set up as an archive from the very beginning. In the meantime, I've become known as the archivist of Moscow Conceptualism.

That the magazine is called *Pastor*[2] of all things had to do with my role as a "shepherd," that is, as someone who reconvened and brought back together all the Russian artists who were suddenly spread across the world. Actually, I should have translated the magazine into German since I was in the West and not in Moscow anymore. But my aim wasn't to introduce Russian art to the West—which was the concept of the magazine *A-Ya*, for instance—rather it was to further develop the creative lineage of the Moscow scene even if it had moved to the West. Naturally that could only happen in the Russian language. It was a paradoxical and somewhat strange situation, and this is evident in the title: "Pastor" is Latin and thus straightaway reveals that I'm no longer in Russia. For the West, however, "Pastor" has a religious, Catholic meaning, which consequently evinces a certain irritation in contemporary art.

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[2] Russian for shepherd.

Using the ideological mask of the pastor I could, nevertheless, successfully maintain the old communal system of relations that were developed and perfected by the Moscow art scene. I gathered trusted authors in the pages of my magazine. As such, I renewed the familiarity and intimacy of samizdat as well as the tradition of verbal, private conversations that occurred in the times before Perestroika and this informed my publishing activities. At the time, *Pastor* was the appropriate frame, the appropriate format for me, and it was also very important for my own artistic development.

AG: The attempt to sustain the familiarity and intimacy of samizdat in Pastor's network seems to also manifest itself in the content. Surely it isn't by chance that its own history, that is, the history of Moscow Conceptualism, is a constant theme of Pastor's issues?

VZ: Yes, I tried to reflect upon and capture our heritage and development in the issues. The first issue was called "Names." Afterwards, there was a "Geography" issue, that is, we positioned ourselves. Then came an issue about making books, since so many Moscow artists earned their livings as illustrators and book designers in publishing houses during the Soviet Union, and the practice of making books was integral to their artistic production.

Incidentally, another publication emerged from the first issue on names that, in a way, reflects upon the foundation of my publishing and editorial activities: *Iz zhitiya promokshego startsa* (*From the Life of the Wetted Elder*, 1994/95, ten copies). Encrypted initials of all of the nineteen authors and artists of the first issue are depicted. The initials as such symbolize the beginning. Black-and-white childhood photos of the authors and artists are attached to them on a second fanfold—they are recognizable, of course, only to this small flock itself. The majority of the circle from which the publications arose and to whom it was targeted is captured here. The whole thing was organized as a fanfold that can be formed into a circle—thus depicting the hermetic circle of Moscow Conceptualism.

As for the title: Russian literature in general and Dostoevsky in particular depict the "starets" (elder) as someone who demands great respect and who possesses the gift of prophecy. He is practically a holy person. The old man in the title of my book has become wet. "Promokshiy" (wet) has two meanings here: the first suggests the old man has pissed his pants, that is, he's in a situation in which beginning and end, childhood and old age come together (after all, childhood photos and initials are to be found in my book). The second meaning is based on the word "promokshiy," which contains the abbreviation MOKSHA that stands for "MOskovskaya Kontseptual'naya SHkolA" (Moscow Conceptual School). The entire title can then be read as "From the Life of the Elder of the Moscow Conceptual School." I then put myself in the role of an old archivist, which perhaps anticipates the future.

AG: What is different here to the earlier samizdat publications?

VZ: By the 1990s, it naturally needed a new format and a new concept. With the *MANI Files*, you simply couldn't produce fifty copies out of principle. In that way, it wasn't really a magazine. It was much more for internal use. There was no means of distribution. The print run was never an issue for Andrey Monastyrskiy, who later published *MANI Papers* (*Sborniki MANI*) following the *MANI Files*.[3] Of course he distributed the things but he demanded that they should be returned. My concept, in contrast, was: I'll make thirty, fifty or even more copies to give away for free. With one copy for every contributing author. It was important for me that every author received a copy. After all, we could no longer pass them along from hand to hand as we did before. We no longer lived in the Soviet Union, we no longer lived in the same city, but rather in America, France, and Germany.

AG: In comparison to the *MANI Files* and other samizdat publications, *Pastor* doesn't look like it's handmade, like it's samizdat. It lacks the typical aesthetics of dirtiness and poorness. Instead, it seems as if you put a lot of emphasis on the craft not being apparent.

VZ: Yes, my books and magazines look like "normal" books that were printed in larger print runs. The aesthetic quality of these works, however, lies in the finesse of the book design, which follows the timeless rules of classical typography. It is not the artist that is needed here but rather the book designer. Everything needs to be competently and professionally executed, the book should immediately reveal itself to the reader though the designer should remain invisible for all intents and purposes. In Russian, this is called "Oformitel'," which is not a designer or an artist—it's much lower in the ranking. That's why I would never call myself a designer. If anything, then I'd be a typographer.

AG: In utilizing this classical reserved typography, you act as the humble editor who steps behind the participating artists and who forgoes the signature of his/her own authorship. Doesn't that overlook the artistic element?

VZ: No. You can be professional in various ways. What is important is the approach. I could sign all of my publications, I even did that in the beginning with *Pastor*. For me, these are the works of an artist. I could even put them in a glass case. These are no different from my other works.

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[3] Six thematic issues between 1986 and 1991 in an edition of three to five copies.

It is also very important to me to have direct participation in the production process and that the books are not mass-produced. As such, every copy contains my own energy, my vigor, even if it isn't noticed by every reader—precisely because the books look like they were professionally made upon first glance. In reality, however, there's an awful lot of work, time and energy that goes into every edition since I sketch the things on the computer first (in the beginning I did this on a Macintosh Classic), and then I arrange everything on paper, glue them together, etc. Only then do I go to a copy shop, where I not only copy but also cut and bind them myself—with my hands and not with a machine, that's all manual labor! I've even made a video of my process. If it wasn't like this it would be mere production, which for me is no longer art. Of course, it doesn't all add up. But I stick with it: I don't want my publishing activities to be done mechanically.

AG: Then why did you gradually increase the print run? Was there an increase in demand?

VZ: Demand? No. I've never sold them, I gave them away. The increase in print run was connected to my physical capabilities. There are only as many copies as I'm actually able to produce. I thought that I had the strength to make more after the magazine's first two issues of thirty copies. The fourth and fifth issues then had fifty copies and I could also cope with that. In hindsight, the sixty copies I made for the sixth issue proved to be optimal. 100 copies was too much, it was too difficult for a single person. That's why a number of copies from the last two issues, #7 and #8, haven't been finished yet. They're still waiting for the binding and the cover. If someone were to order a copy, I could quickly put it together. Maybe this is a kind of book on demand that has come about—but it wasn't planned of course.

AG: Why did you discontinue the magazine in 2001? Was it a sign that you didn't finish the last editions?

VZ: No, they have nothing to do with one another. The times changed. After the eighth issue in 2001, I noticed that the situation was different. Actually, the magazine should have been discontinued much earlier. Its necessity had disappeared, its concept had outlived it, the epoch was over. That which interested me in the Moscow Conceptual School—the circle, the relationships—was gone. As such, my inner drive was lost. Collectives are very important to me, I react strongly to such things.

AG: What happened next?

VZ: I made a few of my own, independent publications as the author. And soon thereafter, it became possible to commission books. It was another, new technology and I had the desire to make books like that. A specific format corresponds to every age—you can't hold onto a format forever. In 2005/6 I made a series of portrait books of friends and artist colleagues. In a way, my archival streak was united with my artistic photographs, the book format and the new technologies. These books only exist in three to five copies as well.

After that, I began making what you could call pseudo-catalogs of my large artistic projects. It takes me at least half a month for a catalog, that is, for the compilation, the photo selection, the writing of texts, typesetting, copy-editing and proofreading. I then order three to five copies of it, I can't afford more. I call it a "pseudo-catalog" since *I'm* the editor and not the institution that has invited me. They don't want to make a book so I make it myself to have it. This is important for me. It's also a "pseudo-catalog" since it's only a model or sample for a future one. You could say I prepare everything for a future publisher. Everything is ready, and so whoever wants it just needs to take it on.

Recently, I've been dreaming about making books of all my collaborative projects. For me, the book is the appropriate format—as an author—to collect things, edit them, also typographically, analyze and show them—as finished material, as a suggestion. It's how I see things at the moment and it's for later, for posterity. They are bricks for the future. This isn't just a form of documentation. A book is not an archive, it's an artistic gesture. In a way, the books made from my collaborative projects are created in the process of making the project. During the actions of our group Germaniya (Germany), for instance, I already understood that one needs to collect material and make books out of it. Afterwards I gave it to the four contributing artists. Afterwards that was it, it was over. That is, even today, when you can easily produce high print runs, I use a format that emerged from the tradition of the 1980s because I will never need more than ten copies. In principal, I could and should sign them. I have about twenty such books in the planning phases.

AG: Do these books also "function" as publications, in the definition you previously gave for samizdat publications?

VZ: Yeah, that works. Everyone who is involved gets a copy of the photo books as well as the books documenting actions, of course. And I show all of the catalogs to my guests. At the end of 2014, for instance, I had an exhibition of my newest works in my studio for two months. You could call it an AptArt.[4] I showed every visitor the catalog for my installation *Plyaska mërtvykh yazykov. Osen'yaya kollektsiya odezhdy* (*Dead Languages Dance. Fall collection*) that was at the fifth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2013. We leafed through the pages together and I told them about it. After all, I can't hang everything on the wall. But, I also upload the books as PDFs on my homepage. And sometimes I show the books in exhibitions.

AG: Just like in the samizdat era when the artists were forbidden to exhibit and consequently invited people over to their houses and showed their works there? Is the method of showing the books the old one? Do the catalogs "function" as they previously did in the context of meeting and discussing?

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[4] This kind of unofficial AptArt, or apartment art, in the 1970s and 80s resulted from the exclusion of a large portion of artists and writers from the official art and literary scene in the Soviet Union. This familiar setting was a precondition for generating the informal character of studio visits and the ensuing, now fabled, endless talking about everything and anything in the kitchen.

VZ: Yes, exactly. But somehow it's a different model than the previous one.

AG: Is your publishing house Pastor Zond Editions actually registered?

VZ: Of course not. It's a part of reality that hasn't been registered anywhere.

AG: Have you ever tried to get an ISBN for one of your publications?

VZ: No, the thought never occurred to me, just as it never occurred to me to sell the books as print on demand or to try to find a publishing house. I use up a lot of time and energy and money on these books. Afterwards I put them on the shelf [fig. 3] and then for me they're finished, completed.

AG: You never had the desire to make your publications known to those outside of your narrow circle? Are "outside" readers of no interest to you?

VZ: I always clearly had in mind who I was producing my books and magazines for. That is to say, I personally knew all of the readers and I was only geared toward them. It's about fifty or sixty people. With a higher print run, I would enter an entirely new terrain that I can't appreciate and that I don't aspire toward. No, my editorial activities were always aimed at a smaller audience. I doubt that anyone outside of it would be interested in what I'm doing. That's why I choose the smallest possible format I can cope with and show. This form of distribution may be somewhat archaic.

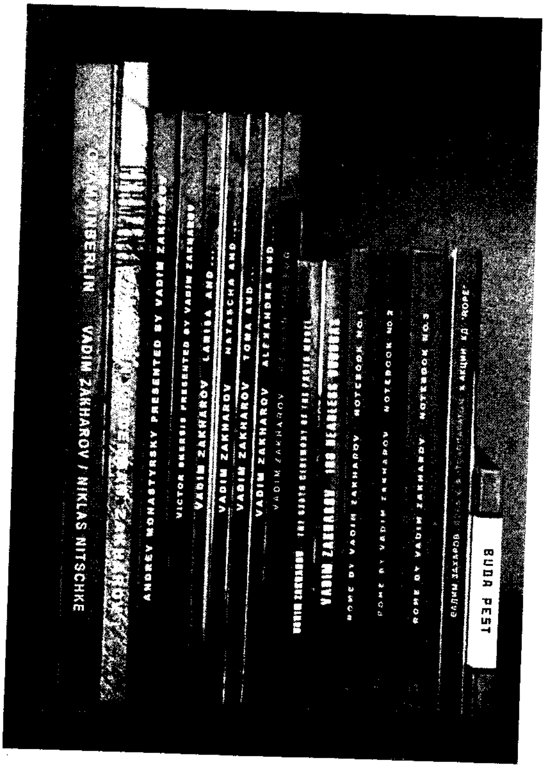

VADIM ZAKHAROV / NIKLAS NITSCHKE
BERLIN
ANDREY MONASTYRSKY PRESENTED BY VADIM ZAKHAROV
VICTOR SKERSIS PRESENTED BY VADIM ZAKHAROV
VADIM ZAKHAROV LARISA AND ...
VADIM ZAKHAROV NATASCHA AND ...
VADIM ZAKHAROV TONA AND ...
VADIM ZAKHAROV ALEXANDRA AND ...
VADIM ZAKHAROV
VADIM ZAKHAROV 100 HEADLESS
BOOK BY VADIM ZAKHAROV NOTEBOOK NO. 1
BOOK BY VADIM ZAKHAROV NOTEBOOK NO. 2
BOOK BY VADIM ZAKHAROV NOTEBOOK NO. 3
BUDA PEST

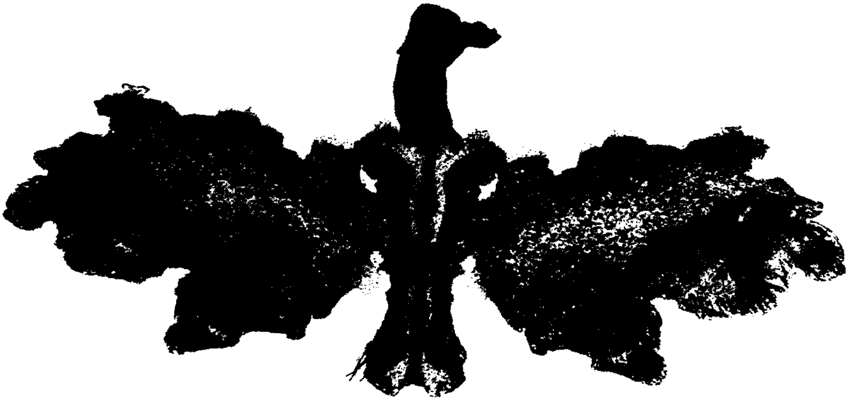
Fig. 3. Recent self-published books by Vadim Zakharov. Photo: Vadim Zakharov.

But it also has something authentic to it. Only this form of limitation can create trust, as much between the contributor and the editor as between the two of them and the reader—who for the most part belongs to the circle of contributors or is close to them.

AG: But shouldn't it at least be possible for the public to find out about it?

VZ: Of course. If I had extra money, I would maybe produce twenty extra copies and give them to libraries. But for now they're all just collecting on my shelves. Of course this is a very limited sphere of influence, one could say: a very local sphere. But we didn't feel local and isolated even back in the Soviet Union. We always felt like part of the culture at large. We were convinced that we were contributing to the culture at large with our circles and publications and not just filling a niche or serving particular interests. Which is more the case today when everything is crumbling into smaller and smaller subgroups. But back then, we were culture. That's also why it isn't true to say that samizdat was the underground or counterculture. The thing is, I take it for granted that I'm anchored in and well-known enough in Russian culture. That's why every book I make has a certain impact, it's always totally clear what place it has. That's also why it isn't interesting to me to worry about the sales or the distribution of my things. Maybe nobody knows about these books. I have no idea what the next generation will say or whether these things will ever be archived. But I do know why I make them and who I make them for.

Translated by Shane Anderson



A Signature of Indifference

Lucas W. [illegible]

Only free beings can be strangers to each other.
They have a shared freedom but that is *precisely* what separates them.

Using my own artistic practice as the starting point, the following is a suggestion to the means of making public from the perspective of indifference, and an attempt to unfold the idea of an artwork which exists at a threshold.

Indifference is a space where differences meet, it is an in-between space. Strategies such as representation, replacement, and separation are commonly used in the act of making something public, but how do these strategies coincide with an artwork that exists within indifference?

From the perspective of an idea of indifference, the act of making public may have to be rethought. Because how can it even be possible to make anything that is placed at a threshold public when it is neither visible nor invisible, neither proper nor improper, but something in itself? Is the act of making public the actualization of the artwork, not toward an end, but as a perpetual taking place? Can the signature of indifference be a strategy that can escape the condition of the spectacular capitalism, which mediates social relations through images, everywhere in present society? Will the signature of indifference be a way of changing the relationship between the artist and the artworks?

The following example, from my own artistic practice, of the act of making public is found in theft.

It is the theft of a backpack, one containing a collection of artworks that has been purposefully curated to be stolen. The backpack was brought on a trip to Southeast Asia in the spring of 2015. It was used for small outings to various places, and as such it retained its intended function. Exposed in use, anyone could steal this backpack.

By being in the backpack, the artworks are indifferent to any other objects that the backpack could contain, and as such not even different from the backpack.

The theft of the backpack is a situation in which the artworks are being actualized. They now form part of the context of a theft.

One of the works placed in the backpack resembles the 1959 English edition of *Jealousy* by Alain Robbe-Grillet. The former has been rewritten word by word in order to appropriate the language style of the latter.

The story in the book takes place on a tropical banana plantation where the narrative is told in a dispersed movement, implicating that the same events repeat over and over again like distorted pictures.

Two artworks have been added to the story in such a way that they appear in certain rooms of the plantation house every time they show up in the narrative. The artworks have been formed to be indifferent from the language of Robbe-Grillet, following the narrative, only to appear when the specific

rooms are described. One of the appended artworks is a postcard, with the picture of Sandy Island on the front, exposed in the bedroom.
A print run of 100 copies was made to be set in different contexts in different parts of the world. As of now, copies have been made public in Berlin, Istanbul, Tokyo, London, England's Lake District, Beirut, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Mostar, Venice, Stockholm, Paris, Bangkok, Amsterdam, and Geneva. All of the books have been placed in different situations and settings while sharing the commonality of being in a zone of indistinction within the given context, and like the situation of the theft, it leaves the works in the backpack indistinguishable to the witness.

The rewritten book is not a readymade, a copy, or a representation, but is rather like a sculpture, which attempts to portray an object, and like every translation and mediation it includes a change, the work is a reassembling of the (object) context of concern, that will never be one to one.

Like an inverted readymade expropriated from what I would like to call the common gaze of separation, the signature of indifference places the artwork within an outside. Today's contemporary art is dominated by the idea of the readymade, which constitutes a gaze of difference separating objects in their presentation and separating them from the world. Thus the discourse of art risks turning objects into spectacle, i.e., into objects that demand a gaze to exist.
By being placed outside this zone of separation, the artwork is able to enter the sphere of indifference, where the object is not separated from the world, but included in its context, in such a way that the artwork has its own presentation, its own image.
The means is thus the threshold between the context and the appearance of the work, which is coming into visibility as its own appearance.
The movement of the artwork is then separated from its own separation, brought back into the world, away from the gaze that forces it away from its context, and therefore escapes the spectacular that turns everything particular into spectacle. The work is left in a condition where there is no longer any point in the gaze of separation, where the work is distinguishable from its context, as in what makes it different, and should rather be approached in its indifference, in its taking place.

It is worth noting that the strategy of indifference is not a refusal of an exhibition space, or any other defined space as such, but merely a strategy that can be converted into all contexts, as long as there are differences.

Language's ability to transform singularities into members of a class by tracing "the antinomy of the individual and the universal has its origin in language. The word 'tree' designates all trees indifferently, insofar as it posits the proper universal significance in place of singular ineffable trees [...]."

This process of belonging in the language resamples the relation that makes the experience between the book in the backpack and the context indifferent. By being placed in the contingency of the world, actualized by the theft, the appearance of the artwork is transformed into something general.

It is not an attempt to bring the artwork back into an original place or essence, but to let it exist by its own means.
The artwork that has its own image is placed inside its context in such a way that it is determined through the totality of its possibilities, they exist outside of its being. This means that the experience of the artwork is determined by the possibilities within its context. The outside is not another place in regard to properties, but precisely the experience of indifference between the work and its context.
The means of making public are not something else in regard to the artwork but constitute a possibility for a transition from one actuality to another.

In order to grasp the artwork as more than its function within a given context, as different from its form, it must be understood as an idea, as an image without an end.
The idea is what escapes the belonging in language, "the idea of a thing is the thing in *itself.*"
The idea is then what draws the artwork away from its context, not in a movement toward any absence of object or context as such but toward the artwork itself, toward what reveals the artwork as it is.
The aim of the artwork is not to render a specific reading of its content or context but to reveal its being by means of its own image.
The artwork of indifference is what reveals a form of communality as such. It is therefore a relation between differences that meet at a threshold.
After the experience of such an artwork, how is it even possible to think any idea outside, beyond, or before the systems of difference that are already at work? Then, can indifference be determined as the idea of a relationship?

The act of making public forces the artist to be strangely remote from their artwork.
The image of the artist and the image of the artwork are not indifferent, which means that they can never coincide fully and constitute a relationship like the one that is to be found in language, and in the concept of enunciation. "An enunciation is always inscribed in a particular *subjectivity,* a subjective context characterized by semiotic *intentionality.* Someone is *performing the enunciation;* enunciation is an act performed by a speaker who stands in relation to an addressee." The artist is then present in the artwork as the subject is in the enunciation. Just as the subjectivity is inscribed in the exercise of language, and the artist is in the making of the artwork.
According to my conception, the artwork is like an enunciation that has left the speaker to become its own speaker, and in that sense it addresses itself

as such, and therefore it is not a relationship that can be grasped visually or in any particular aesthetic property outside of its context, and then lead back to the artist, but must be found in the very existence of the work as an idea, in its being indifferent.

The act of making public is not the separation of the object from its context in order to make it different, but the separation of the making from the artist, toward the world, and thus it is the actualization of the artwork not toward a final form or end, but toward its own existence. Actualization must be thought of not merely as the realization of potentiality but also as the act of impotentiality, to be and not to be. Potential and impotential at the same time, actualized as its own image, suspended between being public and not public, available and not available, concealment and unconcealment. To make public is thus to give the artwork to itself, to its own potentiality to become.

The artwork is without any specific message: its properties are such that none of them constitute a difference.

To communicate the work without its belonging to a context is to communicate its non-belonging to differences.

To communicate its belonging to a context is to make it indifferent.

But to communicate the work as itself, as an idea of a relation, is to communicate the space between belonging and non-belonging, communication and image, fiction and reality.

This space is the point where the visibility of the work itself is coming into visibility.

That is also why insofar as it is indifferent from its context, there is no proper way to experience the work, and so the proper has no other content than the improper.

The artwork is not something static but a dynamic structure oscillating between differences, as long as it is itself.

This means that it is the witness who extends the artwork into something of interest.

Credits
Giorgio Agamben
Line Brandt
Émile Benveniste
Alain Robbe-Grillet
Guy Louis Debord
Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht
Jean-Luc Godard
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Steve Reich
Emmanuel Lévinas
Philip Pilekjær
Walls and Space

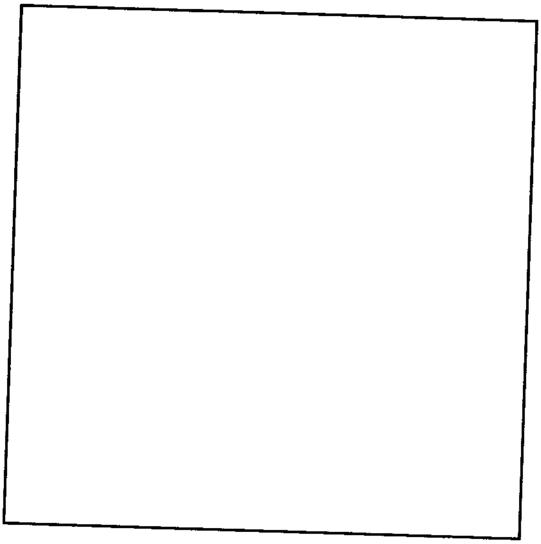


Fig. 1

NO-ISBN – Conceptual Perspectives on Contemporary Autonomous Publishing

Leo Findeisen in Conversation with Bernhard Cella

Flashback*

LEO FINDEISEN: As a fine artist intensely involved with the book as an analog medium, you've been occupied with books as artistic material: collecting over 10,000 recent publications, curating, exhibiting, or copying books, and even producing your own. In your model spaces, salon exhibitions, and performances, the books are constantly set in new juxtapositions. In this way, a space of knowledge has emerged, which I experience as both novel and surprisingly concrete. Maybe we can explore more of the background in our conversation. To start, can you describe how you became interested in books as artistic material? When did you become involved in working with books for the first time?

BERNHARD CELLA: My earliest memories are of starting high school. Looking back, I was driven by two new forms of foreignness: the first was foreign languages, especially the new English course book at school, which was designed in such a boring way. The other was the fact that, for some of my classmates, it was a kind of sport to go and steal cosmetic products and other little objects from the store during the lunch break. I began to photograph the stolen objects with my pocket camera. Over the course of the school year, I glued the photos into the English course book and added comments. After a while, these documents of everyday life at school intermingled with what was taught at school. The blending of foreign languages and tabooed actions resulted in new content. Back then, however, I would never have regarded this as conceptualizing a book. I only gained that perspective later.

LF: How long did it take until your first artist's book?

BC: That was in the early 1990s, when I began to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. My first public processual work was called *1 m² Kunst* (1 m² Art). It was an attempt to create a model of the conditions under which art is created, reviewed, and marketed. In an empty showroom opposite the Academy, I painted a grid of 96 squares of 1 m² each, in which the names of individual protagonists of the Vienna art scene were written. I then informed the artists about their presence in my installation and invited them to the opening. In the end, this led to a foldable catalog called *14 m² Dokumentation zu "1 m² Kunst"* (14 m² Documentation for "1 m² Art"). For me, this publication was the first attempt at developing an artist's book out of a process that took place earlier.

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* Parts of this interview have been published in Bernhard Cella, Leo Findeisen, Agnes Blaha, eds., *NO-ISBN: On Self-Publishing* (Cologne: Walther König, 2015).

The Starting Point for the NO-ISBN Project

LF: How is your current involvement in the self-publishing scene and NO-ISBN related to the process of collecting books in the Salon für Kunstbuch (Salon for Artists' books)?

BC: At the beginning of a process like this, there's nothing more than the notion of a possible "subject." A few artists' books by my peers inspired me, and I also created a few. That sparked my curiosity, and I simply pursued it. As an artist, what impressed me most was the potential for direct translation: in self-publishing people act without filters. In some of the works, the artist's affects and perceptions lead to an odd, deeply personal type of expression.

NO-ISBN is only one part of this, a subgroup of my general interest in books and the art that is produced around the world—its existence only became visible gradually. The development of NO-ISBN as an independent concept is inherent to the material itself. In the first years of the Salon I noticed that a lot of the artists' books I had were missing an ISBN. What defines these books is, as it were, a silent "no." I reacted to that in 2009 with a poster performance at MoMA PS1 in New York. I simply sent out a public call for people to send books without an ISBN to the Salon in Vienna [fig. 1].

What really surprised me was that nearly 500 books arrived over the next few weeks. This was not even a singular incident. Hubert Kretschmer from Munich, an expert of the history of artists' books since the 1970s,[1] experienced something similar about three decades earlier. In 1978, with his recently founded producers' gallery, he put an advert in *Kunstforum*, the leading German art magazine of that time. In the advert, he called for contributions for an exhibition of recent artists' books that he wanted to host at his private home. He received approximately 250 copies. He described this unexpected feedback as "kicking the hornets' nest." Kretschmer also mentioned similar practices of collecting within an art context, such as the mail art movement, in which letters, and also objects, are exchanged across different countries, even across the borders of countries with censorship regimes. Very clear rules were established for mail art. For instance, whoever called for an exhibition of mail artworks automatically committed herself to returning a minimal catalog of the works, including any new addresses, to everyone involved. In this slow give and take process, each individual exhibition could increase each participant's potential for networking.

Most books in my collection came from the U.S., Europe, and Japan, that is, from the Western cultural sphere after World War II. The mailing lists of today's self-publishing scenes were also crucial for this result. These same books have formed the base inventory of my material collection ever since and I use them as a starting point for developing artworks and new concepts.

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[1] Archive Artist Publications, Munich. See his websites artistbooks.de and Hubert-Kretschmer.de.

On the Emergence of New Works from the Salon für Kunstbuch

LF: You run your Salon für Kunstbuch—a "1:1 model of a bookshop" with opening hours, a selection of books, and an event program—as a conceptual and fine artist. Could you share examples of how your own works emerge from your everyday studio routine?

BC: The prehistories of the works differ. After I had spent a whole decade abroad, I returned to Vienna and set up a local studio in 2006. This is, for instance, reflected in an early work from this period, the artist's book *Artist at Work*, or *Neokuratin* [fig. 2]. It mirrors my own search for artistically autonomous models of working in the present. We developed a Band-Aid that helps artists reduce the auto-destructive dimension of what is expected by the curator. Each issue of *Artist at Work* contains a package of Neokuratin, together with numerous photos of colleagues who volunteered as test subjects in their studio routine.

The Salon für Kunstbuch is, overall, the result of my search for a coherent combination of a studio, exhibition, and withdrawal space. The beginning of the Salon in 2007 then coincided with a Documenta. I carried out a product performance at the Venice Art Biennale, the Art Basel and the Documenta, addressing the question "What does the artist do after the death of the curator?"

The constant interaction with the works of others in book form and the everyday work with artists' books led to, for example, an installation on the published work of the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist. Everybody in the art world will probably have encountered one of Obrist's interview books, so his publications were strikingly present in the Salon. In 2012, I had assembled all sixty-nine titles that had been published until then. I painted the book covers in watercolor in their original size [fig. 3], and presented them on a rotating turntable under the title *Covers*. This work was then published as an artist's book during the Vienna Art Week 2012.

Other development processes, such as *Anarchives* (2011) or *Manquants* (2012) emerged from the interaction with visitors of the Salon after I established opening times for the studio, during which anyone could come in. The *Manquants* are a group of works consisting of tapestries that were created due to a breach of common practice. In 2011, I noticed that more than fifty publications were stolen from the Salon. Even worse, the theft could, for the most part, be traced back to colleagues. Most of the missing exhibition pieces were not for sale at all, and included items that were given to me as a loan, or they were unique pieces. I am really amazed how acceptable theft has become in today's art world.

Subsequently, I translated several photos of the covers of missing books into a series of tapestries called *Manquants* [fig. 4], a collection of

Fig. 1. Bernhard Cella, Call for NO-ISBN Publications, PS1, New York, September 2008

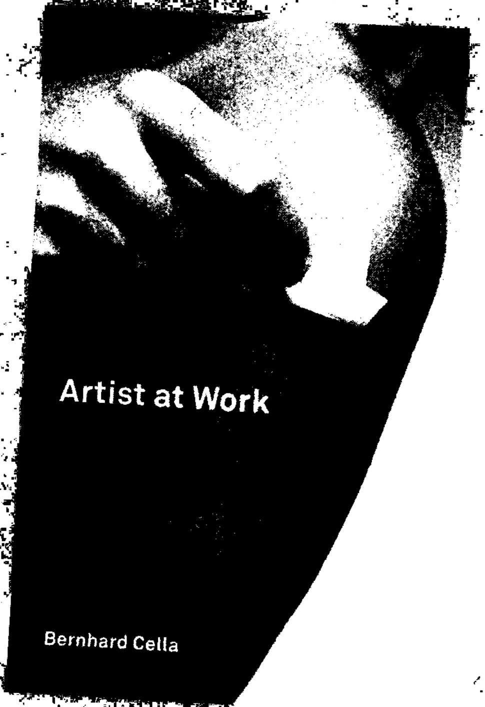

Artist at Work
Bernhard Cella

Fig. 2.

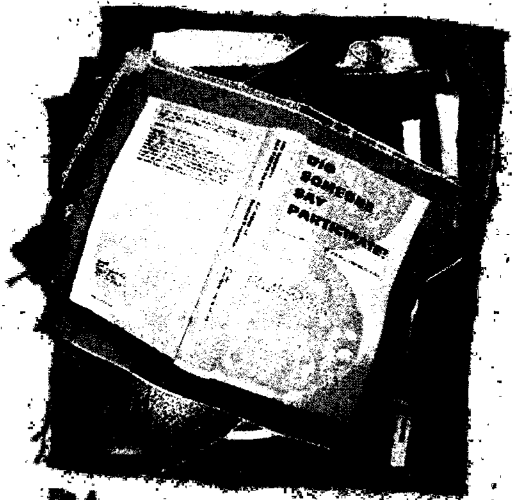
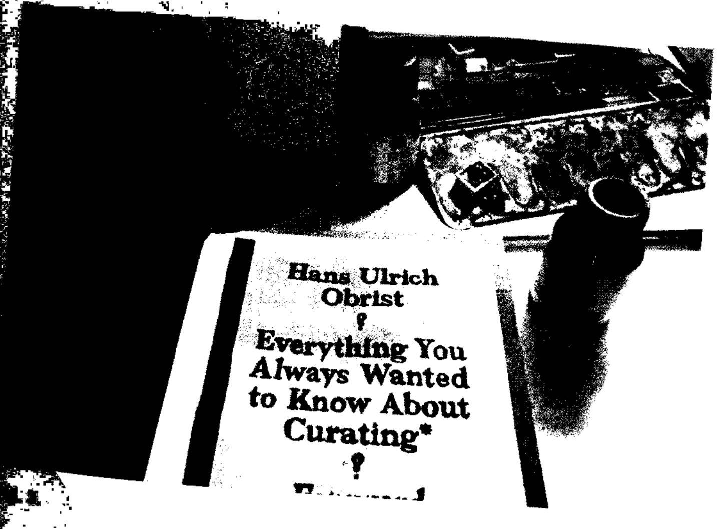


Fig. 4.


Hans Ulrich
Obrist
Everything You
Always Wanted
to Know About
Curating*

…3.

Fig. 2. Bernhard Cella, *Artist at Work*, includes *[illegible]* (Vienna, 2007).
Fig. 3. Bernhard Cella, *Hans Ulrich Obrist neben Hans Ulrich Obrist* (Vienna, 2012).
Fig. 4. Bernhard Cella, *[illegible]*, tapestry in Jacquard knitting [illegible]

injuries. This was my attempt to return what was violently taken from me to my studio in the form of translations. *Manquants* are a psycho-energetic transformer of sorts; they work quite well.

Then there is the *Anarchive* series from 2012, where art books of the same color family are gathered. It arose as a reaction to the habit of some guests who walked in the door and immediately asked, "Where is the theory?" "Where are the photo books?" or "Where are the books with drawings?" Meanwhile, the entire salon collection is arranged according to color. The actual sense of this color grouping is thus to interrupt the visitors' existing systems of organization in a formally surprising way, that is, through an alternative order, and lead to an encounter with unexpected works.

History and Meaning of ISBN and NO-ISBN

LF: It seems that NO-ISBN arose from your constant dealings with your stock of recent artists' books. Before we talk about the contents and peculiarities of NO-ISBN, I would like to suggest that we explore its historical origins: What is the historical connection between ISBN and artists' books?

BC: ISBN is the current international standard for the exchange of books. The biggest book retailer in Great Britain, W. H. Smith, announced its intention to computerize its entire storage system in 1965 and was inquiring about suggestions concerning an indexing method. The answer was soon published by a mathematician and statistician at the University of Dublin, Gordon Foster, who used to be, by the way, a colleague of the computing pioneer Alan Turing, and a researcher for the secret service MI6. His system of numbers served as the basis for the ISBN, which was later internationally standardized and significantly contributed to establishing an electronic cataloging system for mass book distribution. If you know how to read it, the series of digits that makes up the ISBN can tell you, for example, the language or the country where the book was first published. As each ISBN contains a check digit that results from applying an algorithm to the other digits at its end, the ISBN can be understood as a recursive semiotic entity.

LF: What did the creators of artists' books make of the introduction of the ISBN back then?

BC: First of all, artists' books had been published long before that—it doesn't make sense to talk about NO-ISBN before the introduction of ISBN. The picture first changed around 1970 when there was a genuine either—or. From there, the independent publishers of artists' books and art magazines in the 1970s continued to frequently publish without an ISBN, as did political activists and fanzine makers.

Another aspect of the history has to do with technical development, as previously, only very few people were able to produce books. That was the case into the 1980s as the production of printed works was much more elaborate until then, and some of the steps in the production process required professional knowledge, which meant that those who wanted to self-publish were soon confronted with issues they couldn't resolve. But gradually, production steps such as the typesetting, exposure of films and the creation of the printer's copy could be done on a computer. With digital printing, it became possible to produce smaller editions or to reprint them. As a result, there are lower thresholds regarding access to production, and the annoying problem of storage is, at least, alleviated.

NO-ISBN: The Collection

LF: Next, I'd like to talk in more detail about the act of collecting at the Salon. We could begin with some basic facts: what are the current figures in terms of books, and what publications are assembled in your Salon?

BC: At the moment there are around 10,000 different publications, mainly art books and artists' books, which is where the Salon gets its name. The two differ in that an artist's book is a uniquely designed publication in small editions, whereas the genre of art books also includes exhibition catalogs, theoretical publications, and new editions of classical avant-garde works. That's the collection at first glance. At second glance, it becomes clear that a fifth of the books have no ISBN, there are roughly 2,000 NO-ISBNs.[2]

LF: Is there anything else that distinguishes them other than this missing number?

BC: Let me put it this way: They open up unexpected perspectives on other scenes and aesthetics. At micro fairs—and this is my own empirical estimation—about a third of the titles offered there don't have an ISBN. Micro fairs have managed to establish themselves as an autonomous market place, they follow their own rules. The prices are in fact rather low, usually below twenty Euros per title. The artist Pat Steir has come up with a definition of artists' books that also applies to NO-ISBN: "Artists' books are: 1. Portable; 2. Durable; 3. Inexpensive; 4. Intimate; 5. Non-precious; 6. Replicable; 7. Historical; 8. Universal."

Small editions are typical for NO-ISBN. In most cases, less than 100 copies are printed. If no price has been determined, I decide on it, based on my own assessment. Usually, we follow the authors' recommendations as well as the usances and margins of the book trade. You can only get the international titles by directly paying for them anyway, which is also due to the costs of shipping. Goods on consignment are therefore limited to German-language publishing houses.

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[2] Cf. the list in Bernhard Cella, Leo Findeisen, Agnes Blaha, eds., *NO-ISBN: On Self-publishing* (Cologne: Walther König, 2015), 1–74.

LF: Are there commonalities between the NO-ISBN books concerning their contents?

BC: The contents are often self-referential and erratic in a social respect, if the book is only aimed at a circle of friends or a few art people, or conceptual if an artist's book, for instance, contains the text of an exhibition or performance and an essential part of the work remains inaccessible. The actors in this area are as diverse as their ideas and the printed works that they develop. A typical example of this kind of book would be a booklet that addresses the inside, focusing on the private subject and his or her sensitivities. But it only presents what everybody already knows, anyway. It is almost uninformative. The motives and their sequences are interchangeable.

I may have presented the consequences that digital production has for independent book production too much in a positive light, even though this might sound strange: publishing can also mean to retreat into the private realm. The question is then: is the political sphere already too aggressive or dangerous for the authors to deal with it? Or do such aspirations not even occur to them? Maybe there is neither an aspiration nor a desire to participate in a public discourse about anything. NO-ISBN can, quite succinctly, indicate that someone is not at all bothered by others who assign him or her to the mainstream, that is, something everybody is doing. The collection of NO-ISBN ultimately covers the entire spectrum from subversive gesture to New Biedermeier.

Unfortunately, the epoch that we now remember as Biedermeier is more present than ever, that is, in the form of the climate of the surveillance state. After 1819, the Prince of Metternich installed the most powerful censorship and spying network in Vienna that had ever existed in Central Europe. For instance, any publications of less than 320 pages, such as pamphlets or magazines, were strictly controlled and banned, if deemed necessary. Via relay stations in Mainz and Frankfurt, Metternich became the best-informed man on the continent. So the citizens under surveillance focused on their domesticity, whether they wanted to or not.

LF: In the context of NO-ISBN, are there also books in which someone is deliberately opposing the contemporary Biedermeier of his or her environment?

BC: No, not directly. But in some NO-ISBNs, there is an indirect awareness-building against these Metternichian tendencies. There are numerous references to varieties of voluntary self-censorship given the comprehensive surveillance and recording of our phone calls, bank transactions, and whereabouts. This sense of our time is reflected in many NO-ISBNs, but it does not create a public awareness that would present a potential for opposition.

LF: Well, things are not as bad yet as they were at the beginning of the Biedermeier era, fortunately. Despite all reservations concerning registration systems, there is no alternative to the ISBN in the publishing business, as far as I know. So if you publish without an ISBN, does that mean that you run the risk of being ignored by all public collections and archives?

BC: An ISBN surely increases the chances of being registered in a national archive, since it is the purpose of the archive to represent the entire production of written culture. I think, however, that the public libraries are currently suffering from a severe lack of finances and staff, which means that invaluable competencies will vanish without any replacement. When they are buying books, they have no time for research. Our own use of digital media also contributes to the ISBN sphere's loss of relevance. Putting a few key words and the author's name in the online search suffices, the self-publishers usually have a website or they use Tumblr or Facebook to advertise their products.

LF: How do titles that renounce an ISBN, but still manage to reach an audience, participate in a public dialogue?

BC: Many publishing artists regard, for instance, political participation as an essential component of their creative processes. This can directly concern the content of the book, its democratizing properties in production, distribution, and reception, or its function as a role model for an alternative economical system, as a book market distinct from the art market. I should give you some examples.

The publication *The American Holocaust* was produced to accompany the petition to return Montezuma's crown which had been given to Emperor Karl V of Habsburg as a war trophy by the Spanish conquerors to Mexico. Today, the featherwork crown is kept at the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna. This NO-ISBN was anonymously published in 2013, which suggests that the topic and therefore the authorship of this book was considered to be politically sensitive.

The artist's book *Black Market* by Pawel Althamer documents the development of a work. For more than two years, Pawel Althamer has worked on a group of sculptures called *Black Market*, which has, as its center, a self-portrait of the artist in African style. At this time, he encountered Issayas, Elmi, and Emanuel, three African immigrants living in Warsaw. Pawel invited them to come to Berlin for three weeks and to work on his group of sculptures. *Black Market* documents each individual step and decision.

Further installations of the ensemble take place within the same context, that is, the intercultural work community.

There is a NO-ISBN that was published over the last few years in Vienna by the Sozialistische Patientenkollektiv (SPK, Socialist Patients' Collective) or the Patients' Front, respectively, as an "Organ of patho-practical patients' resistance." In the course of the so-called anti-psychiatric movements of the 1970s, some people decided to "turn the illness into a weapon against the sick system." Numerous connections to the radical left also stem from this time. On the Internet, you can find that an Austrian party of the same name was founded in 2000, but nothing more. Whether an ISBN was left out deliberately here remains unclear.

There is also a direct reference to political discourses in *Asyl aktuell. Zeitschrift der Asylkoordination Österreich* (Asylum today. Journal of Asylum Coordination Austria). It documents, for instance, cases of "human rights violations at the fortress Europe" in 2006. The contents of this series of publications are often only relevant for a certain period of time, for example if they concern the current guidelines for seeking asylum. I would imagine that, for this type of publication in the non-profit sector, other aspects are more important than an ISBN, anyway.

Why did you shoot me? is a notable publication that I bought in Mexico City in 2014. Its background is the scandal surrounding the murder of forty-three Mexican students. There are no indications where or when the work was published, there is also no ISBN and there are no page numbers. The publication in fact merely consists of the cover, title page, empty pages, and two bullet holes from pistol shots. I would call this NO-ISBN an object book, a sculpture that embodies the violence inflicted on these young people, and its aim is to keep the question "why?" alive in a poignant form.

The U.S. artist Martine Workman has compiled any mention of food in Prince's lyrics and ordered them into six groups (breakfast, fruit, beverages, fast food, meat, and dessert). I would call her book an interesting hybrid between artist's book and fanzine.

The last case I want to mention is a pamphlet in the form of three critical treatises on Wikileaks, the cryptocurrency bitcoin, and the Free Software Movement. Interestingly, the only author mentioned is The Wine and Cheese Appreciation Society of Greater London/Kittens Editorial Collective. The magazine can be downloaded for free on antinational.org, and the people behind it encourage further exchanges about its contents, but they strictly avoid mentioning their names.

These examples illustrate the range of strategies behind NO-ISBNs. A couple of artists have also already asked if they could use NO-ISBN as a label for a certain publication, as in "published by NO-ISBN." I was happy to agree. They understood that NO-ISBN is also an interface that I put into space.

Concerning the Boom of Artists' Books and Micro Fairs

LF: I would now like to talk about the boom in the artists' book production and trade that took place over the last decade. How does the scene itself explain this development?

BC: The fact that the artist's book is currently experiencing a revival has certainly to do with the art market itself. Art dealers have discovered, or rather re-discovered, the artist's book as an original and lucrative form of art, just as they did in the case of photography, which was regarded mostly as a reproducible document up to the 1980s. During the 1960s, the intention of the originators of the genre—Stanley Brouwn, Peter Downsborough, Sol LeWitt, Ed Ruscha, Dieter Roth, Lawrence Weiner—had been to create a work of art that was independent of its location, producible in high numbers and thus cheap to purchase. Titles from this era possibly saw the most pronounced increase in value on the art market. Accordingly, dealers, collectors and specialized fairs grew exponentially. By now, this sphere has created its own form of distribution system, the so-called micro fairs, where the titles that are produced in this field can be seen and disseminated.

LF: How old is the phenomenon of micro fairs?

BC: The first fairs emerged in the mid-1990s—Artist's Book Triennial, Vilnius (1994), Rencontres de l'édition de création, Marseille (1997), Editions/Artists' Book Fair, New York (1998)—while most of the more than fifty current fairs were only founded a few years ago.

A book fair can create encounters between different actors. There are artists who produce their own books. Then, there are second-hand bookshops that offer books that are out of print. Additionally, there are publishing houses, big and small, that only promote their own titles. A micro fair usually takes place as an additional event of a book fair. It's often the alternative publishers or publishers of books without ISBN who present very interesting and enriching titles. Most of these publishers are happy if their book sales cover their travel expenses. I frequently have to think of Andy Warhol's statement that, in the future, there will be fifteen minutes of fame for everybody, since the artists who confidently work with this form of publishing are often not interested in the durability of their publication, at least during certain phases of their personal development. In fact, an artists' books fair generates a great amount of attention, and it gives like-minded people the opportunity to meet each other. Personal exchanges and marketing efforts for one's own work are not at all looked down upon, but rather celebrated. The processes have accelerated and the so-called micro fairs have developed into traffic junctions for art.

This also has an influence on certain publishing houses and the artists' book trade. A new public sphere has developed here, and also a new market place. In this context, I find the Arts Libris in Barcelona interesting. Together with Mela Dávila Freire, who was the first head of the MACBA Study Centre in Barcelona, the Swiss curator Moritz Küng co-founded this artists' books fair. This fair also wants to find its own profile and make it more poignant. In the future, the Arts Libris will try to, for example, attract a larger number of international participants. To reach this goal, they generate content themselves—also in order to distinguish itself from other fairs. In 2015, Arts Libris was organizing, for the second time, an international symposium; it presented the exhibition *This is the Cover of the Book* (named after the book published in 1964 by Fluxus-artist George Brecht); it featured a Speakers' Corner for exhibitors, where they could present their program, their most recent publications, or upcoming projects. Then, Arts Libris purchased books and works available at the fair for the collection of Fundació Banc Sabadell and initiated their own series of artists' books, the AL series. It is connected to a production award for an artist featured at the fair, who will be invited to present a new title at next year's fair. Küng's aim for the development of Arts Libris is therefore to find a well-adjusted balance that leads to a reciprocate interchange of the alternative and the established. Concerning the micro fairs, it is safe to assume that similar strategies are being developed elsewhere.

With respect to the ability of these formats to temporarily bring together heterogeneous approaches in art and political discourse, it might be interesting to note what happened to us recently at the fookbair in Frankfurt. We were there to present our book *NO-ISBN: On Self-Publishing* (2015). Parallel to the annual book fair, the Städelschule, a renowned art institution, and Merve-Verlag—who publishes books on philosophy, political theory, and art theory—jointly organized a micro fair. Visitors of the book fair could also visit an exhibition by the school's graduates. The class on "Pure Fiction" writing by Mark von Schlegell enacted an experimental theatre play that attracted more than 300 guests from very diverse crowds of art. And they managed to blend two formats into each other with the DJ who followed up with dance music. The conceptual synergies that can arise from the format of micro fairs are obviously as manifold as the contents of the artists' books themselves.

LF: I'd like to close our conversation with a reference to the social anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and his treatise *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* from the 1980s. The influence of his theories extended to the later development of a "material turn" and the "Actor Network Theory" in the cultural sciences. With Appadurai, one can learn to distinguish between such basic terms as an "object," a "thing," a "tradable good," an "artifact," and a "subject." And at the background of such distinctions of terms is, for him, the knowledge that objects possess the potential for social meaning and acting.

But in 1986, Appadurai could not yet foresee the influence of Amazon or eBay, where all objects potentially become goods that can be traded throughout the world. With Facebook and Google, the most complete and up-to-date profile achieves the highest price, our data shadow is sold as a tradable good. Therefore, in 2015, Appadurai also opens a new perspective on your collection of NO-ISBN: Each of these books presents the subjectivity of a potentially non-eavesdropped "other." This other does indeed live far away on the same globe, but they have not held back from expressing themselves in the materiality of book form and then allowed this object to circulate freely. Perhaps without even noticing, he or she has published without becoming Utah data.[3]

To conclude, I would like to invite you to present a prognosis for the future of analog publishing. Will NO-ISBN be valued in a hundred years as art, or as purchasable products, just like others? Will they change hands in exchange for other objects or for an abstract currency? Which role will the book play in contemporary art?

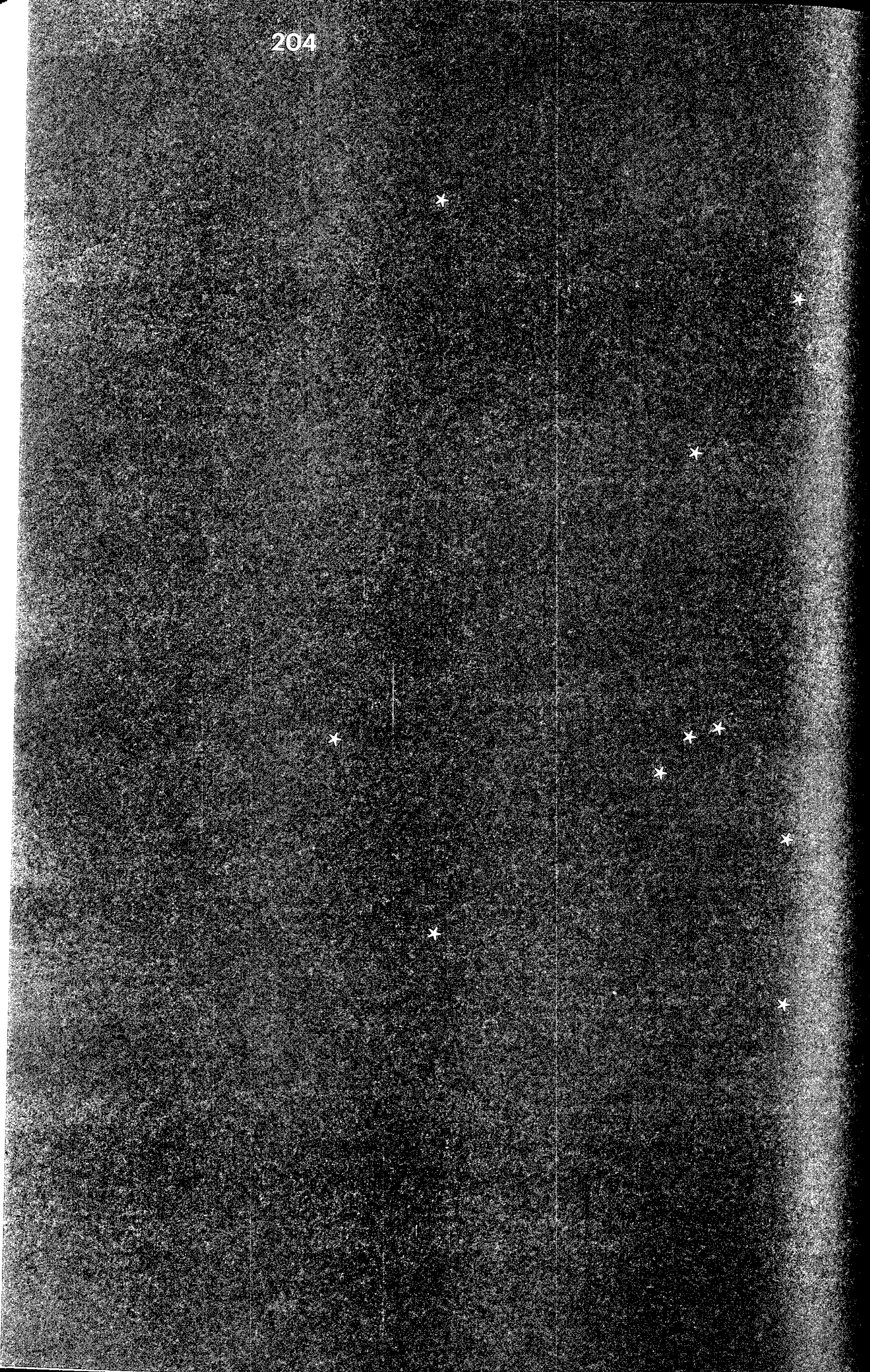
BC: A one-hundred-year prognosis? Before the 2015 Frankfurt Book Fair, numerous articles in the press talked about a counter-trend to digitization, a newly increasing interest in the printed book that could be seen through various indications—the number of book fair visitors, the interest of the younger generation, nostalgic bibliophiles. But whatever isn't circulating online also renounces a form of meaning—that no one can know—in tomorrow's world. In Vienna, we are, by the way, still working on a platform for artists' books—with or without an ISBN—that individual authors or small publishing houses will be able to use to present themselves and make their products visible.[4]

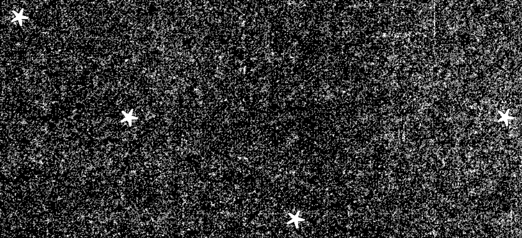
Concerning the one-hundred-year question: indeed, what will the form and content of each book still be able to say about its author, their respective discipline, their place of origin, their intentions, and cultural environment? In the end, it is the materiality of the information bearer "artist's book" that seems to support such a prognosis. I am sure that in the future, a lot of features of analog printing will again play a role in society. NO-ISBNs are books, and books are stable.

Translated by Michael Weh & Lisa Rosenblatt

[3] This term refers to the US National Security Agency (NSA), which is setting up the world's largest digital storage center in Bluffdale (UT). The global public learned about it through the disclosures of Edward Snowden and the Academy Award winner *Citizenfour* by Laura Poirtras. Their plans include making transcripts of conversations, emails, messages, Skype conversations, etc., permanently available upon request for decades to come.

[4] NO-ISBN.net. The whole collection of NO-ISBNs can be seen there in addition to information about their production and the number of copies printed.





BOOKSWAPPING & SERIOSITY DUMMIES *from*

FRAGMENTS:
LIFE
AND
OPINIONS
OF A
REAL EXISTING
ARTIST

Michalis Pichler

207

BOOKSWAPPING

Please note: a friendly book swap is always one on one.

That is, a swap between publishers, artists, or authors where one book is exchanged for another.

Ideally, both parties have a choice, and are swapping their own books.

Exchanging one big book for three small books is “paying in books” (not a friendly book swap).

Friendly book swaps typically take place at the end of book fairs, when exhibitors don’t want to carry home the books they brought with them, while having spotted books they would rather carry home.

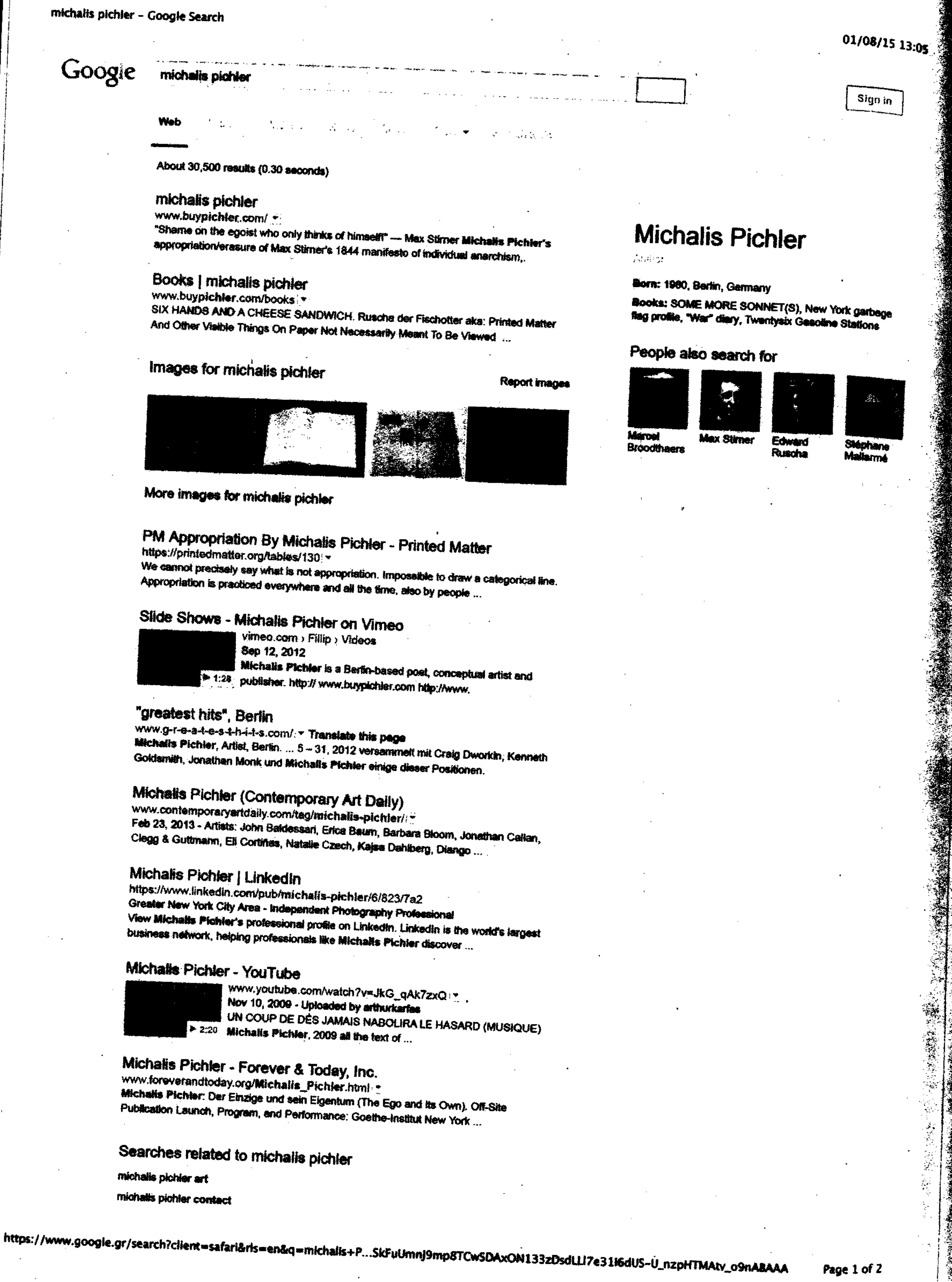
Book swapping is a great way to both distribute one’s production and of building up a collection.

It is also a binding ritual and an expression of mutual sympathy.

I have done friendly book swaps with AA Bronson, Alex Alberro, Todd Alden, Mark Amerika, Michael Baers, Luke Batten, Derek Beaulieu, Erick Beltrán, Jérémie Bennequin, Anita di Bianco, Doro Boehme, Carol Bove, Riccardo Boglione, Sylvie Boulanger, Amir Brito Cadôr, Eleanor Vonne Brown, Sabeth Buchmann, Susanne Bürner, Bernhard Cella, Banu Cennetoğlu, Steve Clay, Albert Coers, Lin Charlston, Julie Cook, Natalie Czech, Adam Davis, Sonia Dermience, Arnaud Desjardin, Sue Doggett, Brad Downey, Martin Ebner, Sammy Engramer, Yusuf Etiman, Jacob Fabricius, Edie Fake, Marc Fisher, Robert Fitterman, Jean-Pascal Flavien, Jan Freuchen, Anne-Valérie Gasc, Peter Gente, Annette Gilbert, Mark Gisbourne, Kate Glicksberg, Patrick Greaney, Dejan Habicht, Sebastian Hackenschmidt, Ben Lee Ritchie Handler, Bill Hayden, John Holten, David Horvitz, Arthur Karfas, Christoph Keller (the one), Christoph Keller (the other), Brian Kennon, Gandha Key, Hubert Kretschmer, Tom Lamberty, Tanja Lažetić, Gareth Long, Helena Louro, Sara MacKillop, Michael Maranda, Scott McCarney, Dan Mitchell, Lasse Krog Møller, Jonathan Monk, Simon Morris, Audun Mortensen, Ariane Müller, Olaf Nicolai, Aurélie Noury, Edgar Orlaineta, Peter Osborne, Dan Perjovschi, Stavros Petsopoulos, Claudio Pfeiffer, Vanessa Place, Tadej Pogačar, Susan Porteous, Nick Relph, Cia Rinne, Stefan Römer, Jeremy Sanders, Martin Schmitz, Roman Schramm, Stefan Schuster, Yann Sérandour, Travis Shaffer, Izet Sheshivari, Willoughby Sharp, Seth Siegelaub, Tom Sowden, Erik Steinbrecher, Marcus Steinweg, Mladen Stilinović, Branka Stipančić, Vassiliea Stylianidou, Derek Sullivan, Temporary Services, Aimée Terburg, Gerhard Theewen, Carolyn Thompson, Nick Thurston, V. Vale, Eva Weinmayr, Jan Wenzel, Roger Willems, Dale Wittig, Eric Zboya, Hermann Zschiegner, and many more.

I do flatrate-swapping with Céline Duval, Jesper Fabricius, John Stezaker, and Eric Doeringer.

The emergence of print on demand (POD) has radically diminished this phenomenon as the authors of POD books have not already paid for bulk printing and hence do not have stock they want to get out there, or get rid of.



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PM Appropriation By Michalis Pichler - Printed Matter
https://printedmatter.org/tables/130
We cannot precisely say what is not appropriation. Impossible to draw a categorical line. Appropriation is practiced everywhere and all the time, also by people ...

Slide Shows - Michalis Pichler on Vimeo
1:28
vimeo.com › Fillip › Videos
Sep 12, 2012
Michalis Pichler is a Berlin-based poet, conceptual artist and publisher. http:// www.buypichler.com http://www.

"greatest hits", Berlin
www.g-r-e-a-t-e-s-t-h-i-t-s.com/ Translate this page
Michalis Pichler, Artist, Berlin. ... 5 – 31, 2012 versammelt mit Craig Dworkin, Kenneth Goldsmith, Jonathan Monk und **Michalis Pichler** einige dieser Positionen.

Michalis Pichler (Contemporary Art Daily)
www.contemporaryartdaily.com/tag/michalis-pichler/
Feb 23, 2013 - Artists: John Baldessari, Erica Baum, Barbara Bloom, Jonathan Callan, Clegg & Guttmann, Eli Cortiñas, Natalie Czech, Kajsa Dahlberg, Django ...

Michalis Pichler | LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/pub/michalis-pichler/6/823/7a2
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View **Michalis Pichler's** professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network, helping professionals like **Michalis Pichler** discover ...

Michalis Pichler - YouTube
2:20
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkG_qAk7zxQ
Nov 10, 2009 - Uploaded by arthurkarfas
UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS NABOLIRA LE HASARD (MUSIQUE) **Michalis Pichler**, 2009 all the text of ...

Michalis Pichler - Forever & Today, Inc.
www.foreverandtoday.org/Michalis_Pichler.html
Michalis Pichler: Der Einzige und sein Eigentum (The Ego and Its Own). Off-Site Publication Launch, Program, and Performance: Goethe-Institut New York ...

Searches related to michalis pichler
michalis pichler art
michalis pichler contact

Michalis Pichler
Artist

Born: 1980, Berlin, Germany

Books: SOME MORE SONNET(S), New York garbage flag profile, "War" diary, Twentysix Gasoline Stations

People also search for
Marcel Broodthaers
Max Stirner
Edward Ruscha
Stéphane Mallarmé

https://www.google.gr/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=michalis+P...SkFuUmnJ9mp8TCwSDAxON133zDsdLLl7e31l6dUS-U_nzpHTMAtv_o9nABAAA Page 1 of 2

Fig. 1. Google Search "michalis pichler," accessed August 1, 2015, screen shot.

209

SERIOSITY DUMMIES

> Here you had a medium that was cheap, that allowed for direct contact with the public, that gave artists a greater autonomy from critics, that would promote social responsibility among creators, that would enlarge infinitely the number of possible consumers, and so much more. This view was obviously based on total ignorance on the part of the artists of the traditional book world that, in its 500-year history (I'm talking here about printed books), has developed with market mechanisms and a celebrity syndrome similar to those that typically oppress the art world.
> **Ulises Carrión**

(sighs) True, true.

Striving for success almost always goes along with striving for seriosity. Peter Sloterdijk calls this "serio-ism" and "gravity of normalization."

This means that in the arts, just as in any other field, a career is built by accumulating seriosity-dummies for a good-looking CV and by name-dropping (cf. p. 207). But it's not only in the realm of CV files, it also affects the very materialization of books.

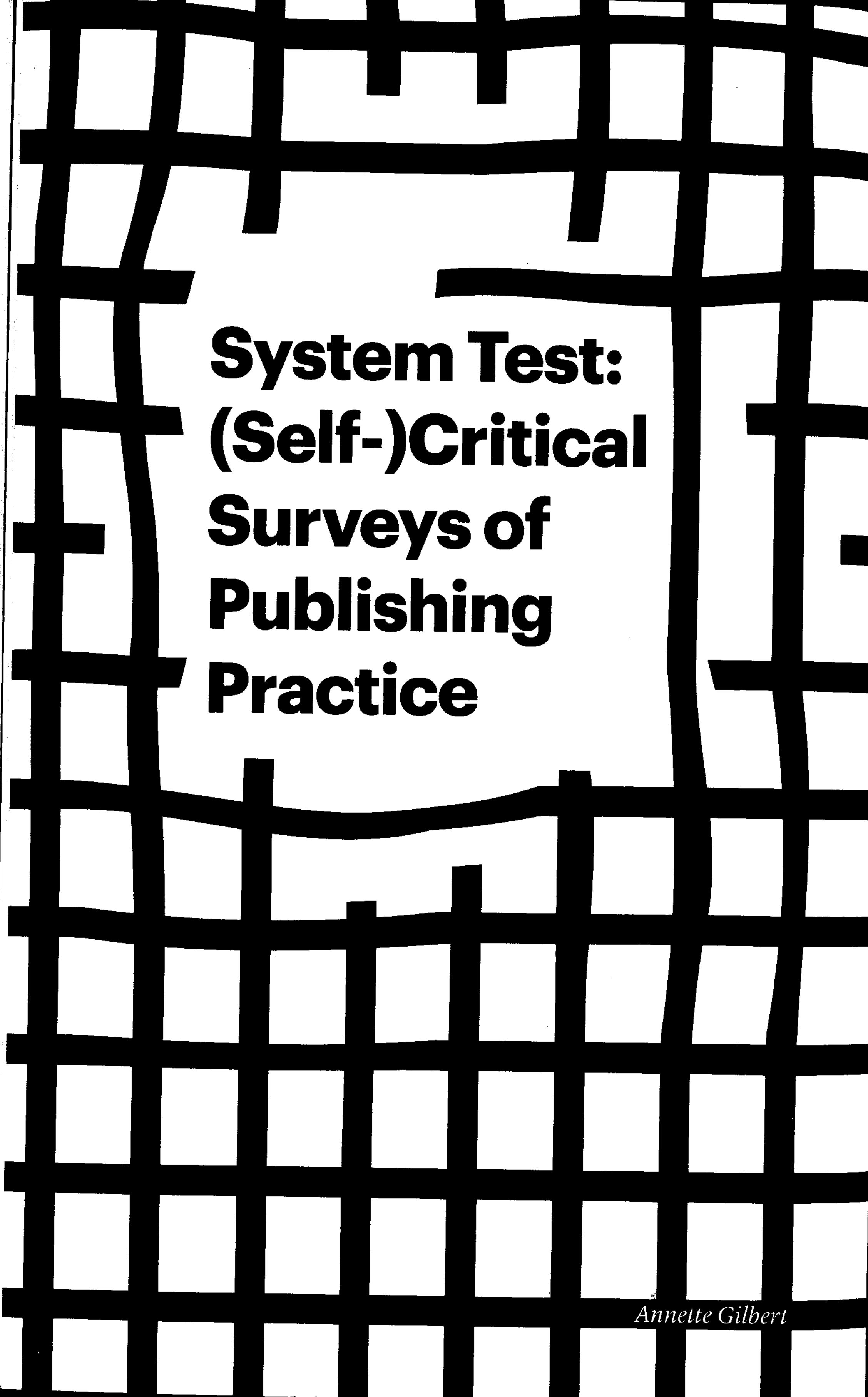
A book with a spine is more serious than a stapled one.
A big publisher is more serious than a small publisher.
Big names as contributors are more serious than small names.
Thomas Kapielski, when he was still self-publishing, self-ironically called his imprint EVS (Eigenverlag stinkt): self-publishing stinks.
Hardcover is more serious than softcover.
Offset is more serious than POD, and forget about Xerox.

That's why Phaidon, Hatje Cantz, and others usually go for a too-high grammature and, often, a hardcover.
That's why the front and back covers of many books are too far apart.

That's why I don't like Richard Prince's books with Gagosian.
They're not too big. They're too big for the wrong reason.

As if the supremacy of wall pieces and "gallery art" over "book art" was more than a misunderstanding.
Is it really the ultimate success to be represented by the biggest commercial galleries and to be bought by the wealthiest collectors?

"Yes, but it's only a book," I often hear.
Not sure about this. What does that mean, "only" a book?
"But it's not only not-a-book, yes," I'd rather say.



System Test: (Self-)Critical Surveys of Publishing Practice

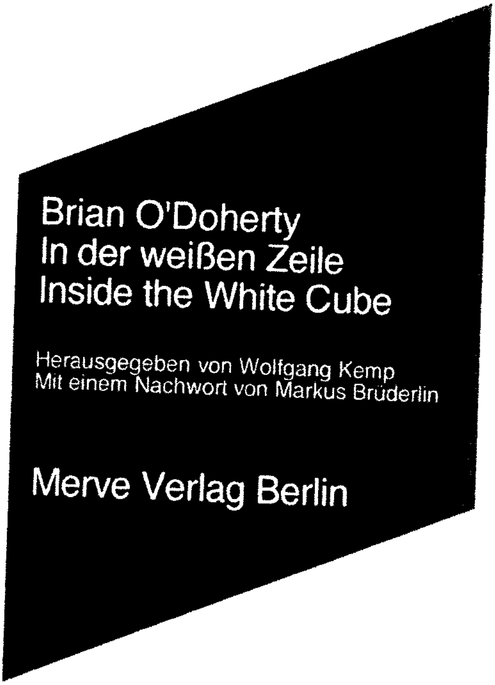
Annette Gilbert

Horizons of the Publishable

Is it right to say that the German artist Fritz Balthaus, who is well-known for his institution-critiquing interventions, *published* his edition *In der weißen Zeile* (In the White Line, 2007)?[1] As a matter of fact, the book that Balthaus's edition was based on was already printed and published by the Berlin publishing house Merve Verlag in 1996, namely, the German translation of Brian O'Doherty's influential works on the white cube. First appearing in *Artforum* in 1976, they have become a reference point for all critical engagement with the institutional context in which art is experienced. The facets of institutional critique in O'Doherty's deliberations are drawn out even more clearly in the German translation of the term "white cube" as "weiße Zelle"[2] ("white cell"). This dramatization may be seen as justified since images of cells and cages were frequently used in reference to the art world's institutions at that time. Even Brian O'Doherty speaks of a "ghetto space"[3] and Robert Smithson of a "cultural prison": "Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells—in other words, neutral rooms called 'galleries.'"[4]

Basing his edition on this translation of O'Doherty's works, Fritz Balthaus allows himself a minimal and yet significant intervention on the book spine and cover: With a single brushstroke, the "l" in the title becomes an "i," that is, "die weiße Zelle" is transformed into "die weiße Zeile" [fig. 1]. Consequently, a new playing field is opened up such that Balthaus transfers O'Doherty's critical insights to the white space of the book. The white page is then taken as an equivalent to the white gallery walls: It is the site where a work is materialized, formed, and presented to the public. This suggests however that the work framed in the white space of a book is exposed to institutional constraints in the same way that a picture hanging on a gallery wall is. This would imply that there are still further systemic constraints manifested in a book's white pages that bear a resemblance to those of an exhibition space's walls, the very walls O'Doherty exposed as being ideologically permeated: "The white wall's apparent neutrality is an illusion. It stands for a community with common ideas and assumptions."[5] He states further that: "The spotless gallery wall, though a fragile evolutionary product of a highly specialized nature, is impure. It subsumes commerce and esthetics, artist and audience, ethics and expediency."[6]

According to Fritz Balthaus's implicit summation, the analogy to the white cube makes it necessary to critically investigate books and publishing practices, since it is self-evident that books have also always been imbedded in major institutional, social, economic, cultural, and (culturally) technological contexts that have the tendency to limit the autonomy of the work and author.[7] This exhortation has recently become more urgent—just as in the 1960s and 70s when the artist's book was "invented"—since publishing and bookmaking has once again been enthusiastically celebrated as a welcome alternative to the compromised art system. But, like in the 1960s and 70s, this enthusiasm about the sheer unlimited possibilities of artistic self-realization



Brian O'Doherty
In der weißen Zeile
Inside the White Cube

Herausgegeben von Wolfgang Kemp
Mit einem Nachwort von Markus Brüderlin

Merve Verlag Berlin

Fig. 1. Fritz Balthaus, *In der weißen Zeile*, 2007, cover. Acrylic on cardboard, signed and numbered, Edition Stella A. © Fritz Balthaus, 2015.

in independent, self- and digital publishing overlooks the fact that the publishing system is itself influenced by innumerable unavoidable preconditions that are “both a boundary or limit and the conditions of a possibility.”[8] Publishing is a highly complicated modus operandi that Rachel Malik defines as

> “a set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational, political, cultural, and, perhaps, above all, other media.”[9]

Malik has characterized the frame that determines every act of publishing as the “horizons of the publishable, which govern what it is thinkable to publish within a particular historical moment.”[10] Thus, books and publishing are neither more “neutral” nor “impure” as the exhibition space, exhibiting or curating. Books are also guided by a “transforming force”[11] that stems from their concrete substantiation, that is, the bringing-into-form of the work in a publication, but also from the process of its socialization[12] initiated by the act of publishing and the institutional framework in which the work is presented. We cannot simply ignore these external aspects or renounce them from the published work. They necessarily shape what is inside:

> “Publication is always ‘publication as’: As a first edition, as paperback, as journal essay, published at the expense of the author, on laid paper,

> as the production of a certain publisher, as employing a certain typeface, as an anonymous publication, as carrying a certain dedication, as unauthorized publication, or as a part of a collected edition, associated with the name of a certain editor, etc."[13]

The cover of the O'Doherty translation is an excellent example for studying this since it clearly demonstrates that "[t]he book is [...] a site where various publishing processes—writing, editing, design, marketing, production—intersect and conflict."[14] The publisher of O'Doherty's essays is the currently very trendy Merve Verlag, a small publishing house in Berlin that specializes in theory and that, to this day, cultivates the memory of its formation from pirate editions and alternative culture that arose during the student movement when publishing and political practice went hand in hand. Their identification of belonging to the subculture can be witnessed in the printing quality and features of the books themselves: they are programmatically "badly made books." We can only provisionally attribute their use of typewriters or lead typesets that are hard on the eyes, cheap bindings, and an unspeakable quality of images to financial concerns. They should rather be understood as belonging to the cultivation of Merve's image. In using these elements, it is as if war has been declared on the fetishization of the book's object and commodity status. But it also propagandizes a distinct "deviationist reading practice": "if need be, one can just buy two, make annotations, take it to the toilet or on holiday, give it away, let it collect dust, throw it away, and use it for every possible thing."[15] By emphasizing a book's use value, Merve Verlag has become an icon of the intellectual scene. To the point that one can even speak of a Merve culture or a Merve sound. This proves that "even the bohemians have their institutions, and that they shouldn't be underestimated."[16]

This image, which naturally rubs off on the texts published by Merve, is primarily transported by the design of the books. In its combination of a pant pocket format, rhombus and font, the cover is of particular importance and has become the house's trademark. The designer Jochen Stankowski is convinced

> "that my design has created a public image for the theories and texts that Merve publishes. You could say it is a brand transported through its design, if nothing else. As such, it gives a cohesion that otherwise wouldn't be there. Presumably, without this visual frame the authors of Merve books would have been perceived as being rather dispersed and not as a way of thinking that is somehow unified or at least related."[17]

O'Doherty's institutional critique is then also at the mercy of this kind of "framing" that imposes a certain community, context, and image on the published texts through their mutual place of publication and uniform packaging, even if precisely this form of foreign domination in the art world is denounced by O'Doherty. Balthaus's intervention thus validates the major realization of the early years of institutional critique, which held that "the artist [...] can hardly comment on an institutional frame without becoming part of it."[18] Consequently, the critique of the white cube as well as the white space of the book can most likely be formulated as being:

> "less in keeping with the model of a *judgement structure* (roughly speaking, in other words, a subject that *positions* itself *vis-à-vis* the criticized conditions), but rather with the model of a *practice* (meaning a subject that *is involved* and *involves itself* in a specific way *in* the criticized conditions)."[19]

From Containers to Frames: Institutional Objects

Elisabeth Tonnard's *The Invisible Book* (Leerdam: self-published, 2012) is one of numerous artistic works that has pursued this model of involvement in recent years. She has managed in a fascinating way to inscribe her work into the system at the same time as removing it: *The Invisible Book* is not tangible, it was never written or printed; it never materialized. Nevertheless, the author indicates that the work was "produced" and "published"[20]; or rather, it has appeared (both in the sense of being published and of being visible). The book can be purchased and it has been treated by critics, presented in exhibitions, sold on eBay, acquired by libraries and undergone two print runs of a hundred copies each. The work's existence can be solely attributed to a post on the artist's homepage on April 27, 2012, an act which is equivalent to publishing, and to its related paratextual framing (since it too gives title, date and place of publication, print run, features, and a detailed description of the work). This is supported by an electronic invoice that every "buyer" receives for each copy purchased.

Thus, the practice of publishing as instituting practice is made manifest in *The Invisible Book* in a remarkable fashion. Given the lack of visible or readable objects, i.e. contents, in *The Invisible Book*, it reveals all of the "externalities" of the publication process that normally remain invisible, even though they are always responsible for the operative conditions and associated circumstances for its existence. In this sense, *The Invisible Book* shifts our perspective: Instead of showing itself, it shows "that which allows it to exist,"[21] it makes the intrinsic dependency of the framed on the framing discernable, something which, in the realm of philosophy, was analyzed by Derrida with his theory of parergon.[22] *The Invisible Book* thereby makes a substantial argument for a publication not being understood only in terms of its contents and design but rather also as "an *institutional object*," whose "existence is dependent upon the existence of a *practice*,"[23] which is, for its part, embedded in historical, social, discursive, technological, economical and mediated contexts—or rather, within the "horizons of the publishable." Tonnard suggests this herself when she says: "it only makes sense to publish an invisible book if all the other ones are visible."[24]

However, what she couldn't predict was that the German artist Joachim Schmid took this game very seriously: by buying up the entire first print run, he thus created a monopoly and has sold individual copies on eBay—effectively undermining the artist's rather idealistic approach when she set the price at €0. Not only does this demonstrate that it is entirely feasible to bring an invisible work into economic circulation so long as it has been institutionally "accredited," but it also demonstrates that works of institutional critique are not immune from being reclaimed by the very thing they critically reflect upon.

Heterotopic Alternatives

Another study of contemporary publishing practice that is committed to the above mentioned mode of highest possible involvement is Antoine Lefebvre's publishing house project *La Bibliothèque Fantastique* (LBF, 2009–2013). Following in the tradition of artistic enterprises,[25] the project attempts to create an economically, legally, and organizationally functioning publishing house that is also, according to Lefebvre, an artwork: "LBF is an *artwork* based on the works of other authors by an artist publisher, whose artistic practice is to publish books."[26] The particular allure of such artistic enterprises—which rarely ever work in publishing—consists in the disorienting simultaneity of the art world and the real world. Positioned in both, they can be understood as heterotopias containing a utopian element since their goal is not to escape reality but to understand and even to change it.[27] For this purpose, it is of great value that they act "outside of [the art world's] conventional systems of representation," meaning that they present their work "as an equivalent to the real, developing in reality without passing through the filter of representation."[28]

Lefebvre has generated the concept of a "minimalist publisher" as a special "experimental procedure":

> "La Bibliothèque Fantastique is a minimalist publisher in the sense that all the superfluous has been removed. Indeed, the books of LBF have no predetermined physical existence, they exist in a state of potentiality on the web, awaiting to become. They cost nothing, you can get them without spending a penny. They have no ISBN either, because they are works of art. They have no color, so that they can be printed in any printer. That's what LBF books don't have, which is almost more important than what they do, because our approach is conceived as a negative of that which is habitually proposed by the market spectacle society. The idea is to show various poetic singularities as opposed to the flashy commodities which our society feeds us."[29]

As an alternative to the prevailing consumer and spectacle culture, this conception implicitly promises an answer regarding the inescapable core of publishing: What is the minimalistic set of activities, practices and conditions that must be provided for one to still be able to speak of publishing?

According to Lefebvre, two particular aspects of publishing (that are still bound to the mechanisms of the market and power) have proven to be indispensable. He sees branding as being essential for the success of the project: "the logo plays a particular role in artistic enterprises, it affirms the brand image of the enterprise. This *branding* is a *sine qua non* condition for an entity that wants to be identified as an artistic enterprise." It would be an oversimplification to attribute the necessity of branding to the economic reality that a company is subjected to. As Lefebvre states, branding is just as important for constituting a work in the art world: "In order to support the idea that this publishing house structure is an (art)work it has been found to be as equally essential to give it a brand identity or branding."[30] Both strands of branding intertwine and this demonstrates the degree to which the real world's general economy and the art world's limited economy overlap, which is why the art world is not really in the position to create an opposition to the "market spectacle society." Similarly, Lefebvre's enterprise reveals that the publishing world functions much like the art world even though the latter tends to think that the world of books couldn't be further from economic thinking.[31]

Just as indispensable for the success of the publishing house project is the role of the artist publisher as a "meta-author," which Lefebvre identifies as an "author who expresses himself through the authors." The visible expression of this prominent authorial position is a clear "editorial agenda, a catalog."[32] This is necessary for the development of the project's visibility in both the art and economic realms. Incidentally, this rationale can already be found in the image that traditional publishers have of themselves. The publisher's catalog is increasingly being spoken of as a kind of "work" that the publisher does even in the realms of book studies and philology. However, in grappling with the figure of the "meta-author," we are still concerned with established, hardly balanced power structures. To be fair, Lefebvre has affirmed the consent of the authors: "The authors that I have published have trusted me and have assented to being used."[33] Yet, this formulation ("to being used," "work made by the works of other authors," "express[ing] ... through the authors") clearly demonstrates the ethically explosive nature of this constellation.

With this in mind, we have a more sophisticated perspective on Lefebvre's claim to pursue a decidedly *alternative* artistic practice with his publishing project. Clearly, this otherness is primarily guided by a search for alternative spaces for art and not by the development of a truly alternative publishing model:

> "This practice is alternative, or other, insofar as it represents an alternative to the usual mode of operation dominating the art world: it is both an alternative space for art; a new place for it to develop differently; but also an alternative to the art market as it develops in the book market."[34]

Lefebvre's publishing project may have been initiated as a result of institutional critique but this critique is only concerned with the art world and art market and not with the book market and the practice of publishing, whose structures, institutions and practices are not being challenged in the tumultuous embraces they are currently receiving from the art world—rather, they are being reinforced.

Ethic-Pretty

A pointed critique of the *book* market from the perspective of literature (which, per definition, has a very different relationship to publishing) was launched in 2013 by VanessaPlace Inc.—an artistic enterprise, whose Chief Executive Officer, the poet Vanessa Place, explicitly wishes to dispel some of the myths surrounding the literary world. The enterprise was founded because Place experienced:

> "[f]atigue with hearing that poetry has no capital; is incapable of capitalization; is market-pure and therefore ethic-pretty; etc. Not only is this untrue, but it allows the conceit of wielding capital, including but, not limited to, cultural capital, in a predictably sanitized manner."[35]

To refute the misconceptions regarding poetry's autonomy and ethical harmlessness, VannessaPlace Inc. aims to demonstrate poetry's real worth, i.e. its function. That even poetry has a market value is revealed precisely in its relation to the art market: "Poetry needs to understand its market cache. Go to an art show and see how many pieces are called 'poetic,' and how that translates as pure capital. [...] Poetry costs. It might as well cash in."[36] The enterprise's first publication *$20* (2013) lives up to the corporate slogan ("Poetry is a Kind of Money") and corporate strategy ("turn cultural capital into capitalized culture"[37]). Consisting of twenty one-dollar bills that were sold for fifty dollars, the publication was, according to the homepage,[38] sold out within an hour.

Strictly speaking, VanessaPlace Inc. doesn't sell poetry. Rather, it sells accumulated cultural capital that primarily profits from Place's high reputation in the poetry scene as well as from her social media competence. It is not by chance that the company bears her name. As such, it takes into account the current "age of semio-capitalism": "As a working hypothesis, let's say we are all of us small corporations, trading our identities in the semiotic market in exchange for remuneration in kind."[39]

In a further work, *Book It*, VanessaPlace Inc. strives to subvert the system based on the ISBN, which, in a nutshell, embodies the commodity status of a book as an instrument of the book trade. However, Place ultimately banks on the functionality of the system, otherwise she wouldn't be able to advertise that the ISBNs purchased by VanessaPlace Inc. that can be placed on arbitrary objects transfigure them into "book[s] of poetry. Or art," "published by VanessaPlace Inc."[40] Regardless of which object is furnished with an ISBN: "it will circulate, or can circulate, as a book able to be bought, sold, *traced* as a book."[41] In this demonstration of the efficiency of the ISBN system, Place is handsomely remunerated: the ISBNs are sold for $50, a price that is clearly higher than what the "publishing house" paid for them.

"Clash of Cultures"

Fiona Banner's publishing house Vanity Press also affixes ISBNs to objects that shouldn't actually be understood as publications. But, what is more, she intricately mixes the practices, standards, and values of the art world and the publishing world by giving each copy of her print editions, such as *Book 1/1* (2009), a unique ISBN:

> "Each print in this edition, Book 1/1, is the same and yet each is unique. Each one has its own ISBN number and is registered under its own individual title. Each one of the edition is therefore an official publication and each is an edition in, and only of, itself. An edition of one ... a book reduced to a reference, purely an imagined space."[42]

The clash of cultures between the art and publishing worlds couldn't be more explicit. The title of the edition *Book 1/1* already alludes to the art system being based on an original, or unique, object. With this in mind, we see that even multiples, editions, prints, and a number of artists' books are committed to this approach and search for ways of generating uniqueness in limited print runs, signing the books and numbering them (i.e. "the same and yet unique"). By contrast, this foreign thought is ignored in the publishing world (excepting the bibliophile) since the goal there is to create as many copies as possible that are, per definition, identical and that, consequently, possess the same value.

In conflating these two worlds, Banner misappropriates the ISBN. Instead of emphasizing that which unifies every copy belonging to the same print run, the ISBN here serves as its own title, individualizing every identical copy of a print run. Consequently, the art world's standards enter through the back door. The copy that is transformed by the ISBN into a unique object, thoroughly corrupts the highly acclaimed democratic nature of the book as a medium—the very same aspect that the artists' book scene and artist publishers constantly invoke and that is also used by Multiple Stores in advertising Banner's works on their website.[43]

Survival Strategy

It is interesting to note that this misappropriation of ISBNs was "avenged" by the British Library and not by the ISBN agency. The British Library is responsible for the legal deposit in the United Kingdom, which stipulates that British publishers are obliged to submit a copy of every publication created in the country. This is done to preserve as much of the cultural and intellectual heritage of the nation as possible. And although this stipulation is not limited only to publications with an ISBN, those publications that lack an ISBN, such as vanity press and self-published titles, generally go unnoticed by institutions, which is why they shouldn't be afraid of the institution's legal requirements. It is also the reason why, should a self-publisher want his/her publications to be institutionally valorized and preserved as part of the cultural production of the nation, s/he would have to become active in the process. In the case of Banner, it can be presumed that the British Library's machinery was activated by the notification of her "publications"[44] by the ISBN agency, and this beautifully demonstrates the intertwining of two institutional practices. That being said, it is remarkable that the focal point of the artistic critique so far has only been on the ISBN, something which must be purchased from a private company but which has no legal stipulations as to its usage. Equipped with legal force and a juridical, ethical reasoning, the legal deposit, in contrast, has received inadequate attention.[45]

In any case, Fiona Banner finally succeeded in getting rid of the dilemma by creating a catalog of all the ISBN works, including the entire correspondence with the British Library as well as the applications for each ISBN as a symbol of distancing herself from the system (*ISBN 978-1-907118-99-9* (The Vanity Press, 2010)). Submitted to the legal deposit, this book is at once a testament to itself as well as to all of Vanity Press's unique ISBN "publications" and it thereby registers them in the institutions and the cultural heritage administered by them.

As a result, these books evade the fate of so-called grey literature, those books that are scarcely ever registered in libraries or archives and which, consequently, are often fated to become invisible or lost. It is noticeable how often one speaks of invisible books in this context.[46] But what is meant by invisibility is very different than what is meant in Tonnard's *Invisible Book*: It is of an institutional nature and not of a material one. This has far reaching implications since whatever cannot be verified by the gatekeeper principle of the established system and cannot be recorded by its institutions (as, for instance, self-publishing houses[47]) is not authorized—it effectively doesn't count or exist.[48] It remains uncertain whether alternative institutionalized forms of legitimization and validation of these modes of cultural production which continue to fly under the radar will emerge, which is why it is true of Fiona Banner what Kenneth Goldsmith once observed in regards to the importance of the academic world in recognizing avant-garde works: "you have the institution as survival strategy."[49]

You Might Like to Know...

In recent years there has been a noticeable proliferation of publications in the branches of self-publishing and POD that run counter to this and forgo such benefits, since they purposefully remain under the radar of the established institutions.[50] Although the sound of freedom and democracy is often associated with POD, we shouldn't forget that artists and writers are also treading here on predetermined paths and that these are of an institutional, creative and economic nature. It is therefore important that these lofty expectations be calibrated with reality.[51]

Thus, for instance, Jean Keller criticizes in his *Black Book* (2010) the equally opaque and contradictory pricing structures of PODs that the author has very little influence over—just as in traditional structures. The basic rates are reportedly determined by the material and production costs that are incurred. Yet, it seems that one of the most expensive raw materials, ink, for instance, doesn't play any role in the calculation:

> "For example, a Blurb book of blank pages costs an artist as much to produce as a book filled with text or large photographs. Furthermore, as the number of pages increases, the price of each page decreases. A book containing the maximum number of pages printed entirely in black ink therefore results in the lowest cost and maximum value for the artist. Combining these two features, buyers of *The Black Book* can do so with the guarantee that they are getting the best possible value for their money."[52]

The sophistication of this maneuver, which tries to squeeze every last drop of value out for the author and buyer, cannot hide the fact that it is impossible in the POD system to form, for instance, an autonomous policy regarding the publisher's catalog, price, and turnover that is not determined solely by economic considerations or factor in the publisher's financial offsetting of profitable and unprofitable publications.

With the companion piece *Blank Book* (2011) Jean Keller reacts to being at the mercy of the widely divergent quality standards of POD providers, a fact that was impressively demonstrated by James Goggin's highly acclaimed student project *Dear Lulu,* (2008-).[53] Whereas Silvio Lorusso praises these circumstances since a recognizable "distinctive physicality"[54] of POD products emerges, Keller's *Blank Book*, consisting of 80 blank pages, (humorously) expresses capitulation:

> "Print on demand is great, you can make all those books you always dreamt of. That's the theory. Between your book and the theory there's Blurb. Sometimes they get it right, sometimes they don't. You can get a book with too many pages, you can get a book with missing pages. You can get a book with wrong colours, you can get a book that isn't cropped correctly. You can get a book with text or photos not at the position where they are supposed to be. There are unlimited possibilities to get it wrong. Not so with *Blank*. It doesn't really matter if the book isn't cropped correctly. Colour is not an issue, nor are text and photos. A few missing pages are not a problem and too many pages are not a problem either. The book is blank. You can do with it what you want. So can Blurb. If you don't like their logo, simply tear out the last page."[55]

This, however, doesn't really help. The logo is but a clearly visible indication that the POD providers—who perceive themselves as being something between a service provider and a publisher—have subtly and yet inevitably contributed to every publication:[56] their significance is greater than being simply a (bad) printer and binder. The empty white book is permeated by contending interests whether the logo is there or not. And like the white cube, a book is "a far-from-neutral zone," it is "a participant in, rather than a passive support for the art."[57]

This point is also demonstrated by Silvio Lorusso and Giulia Ciliberto's POD project *Blank on Demand* (2011), which makes itself fully dependent on the technical and formal constraints of the providers and thereby depicts the authors' limitations in designing books. The project consists of two empty books (with the exception of an ISBN) that comply with the highest and lowest available settings for each parameter—such as format, length, binding and price. The resulting projects are a 10.8 × 17.5 cm paperback whose length is 40 pages and carries the price tag of €5.44 and a 15.2 × 22.99 cm hardcover whose length is 740 pages and a price tag of €999,999.99. The sum of the contingencies that are set out by POD platforms for publishing are demonstrated in this combination. Nevertheless, it is possible to heartily laugh about the absurdities of this powerful machinery: "We were particularly fascinated by the idea of paper sheets going through all the complex print machinery without any purpose."[58]

A similar concept has been explored in the series *Variable Format* by AND Publishing and Åbäke (London 2012), but they play with the extreme settings of even more formats and parameters (ranging from the newspaper to fat page-turners). Seeing as individual copies were produced on seven different platforms (including Lulu and Espresso Book Machine), the series creates a substantial overview of the most important players in the market.[59] The detailed imprint is of note since it lists not only the author and publisher, as in the (mainstream) book business, but also the participants whenever applicable. As such, it indicates the particular context and conditions in which the publication was conceived, designed, financed, printed, published and brought into circulation. Introduced by the fitting formulation (that should actually have been in the imperative) "You might like to know..." a detailed portrayal of the context that the book emerged from as well as the artistic concept, an exhaustive list of its features and the producers of the twelve different editions of each book can be discovered:

> "Variable Format
>
> Published by AND
>
> Designed by åbäke with Pierre Pautler
>
> ~~© AND Publishing and åbäke, 2012~~
>
> Distribution www.andpublishing.org
>
> the name of our publishing activity is AND
>
> Supported by the SEED Fund/University of the Arts London
>
> Printed by [xy]"[60]

This demonstrates that the practice of publishing, even that of self-publishing, is essentially a collaboration,[61] even though many of the protagonists are too often subsequently removed from the creative process so that the final product can be staged as belonging solely to the production of the author.[62] *Variable Format,* in contrast, indexes the breadth of "publishing activities" of AND Publishing and thereby makes them transparent as a "set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational, political, cultural."[63] Keeping this highly complex and currently transforming ecosystem in mind, *Variable Format* also makes clear that to date we've only scratched the surface of all the sets of processes, practices, infrastructures, and relations, that we call publishing. Or, as Lorusso suggests, "sent through the regular postal system, the physical book, is [only] the tip of the iceberg."[64]

Translated by Shane Anderson

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1 Fritz Balthaus, *In der weißen Zeile*, 2007. Manipulated Merve volume no. 190, 20 copies/originals + 8 artists' proofs, Edition Stella A.

2 Brian O'Doherty, *In der weißen Zelle. Inside the white cube*, trans. Wolfgang Kemp (Berlin: Merve, 1996).

3 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 80.

4 Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement" (1972), in *Institutional Critique. An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 140–142, 140.

5 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 79.

6 Ibid., 79f.

7 Similarly, Nick Thurston states: "I think we need to recognise publishing as a specific field of practice and theory [...]. It's similar to the challenge that has faced curating and exhibitions history since the 1990s: how to develop a sophisticated meta-consciousness about a field of action that many assume to be secondary or to overlap with already established disciplines of knowledge, like art history." Louise O'Hare, "Artists at Work: Nick Thurston" (22.8.2012), http://www.afterall.org/online/7239.

8 Rachel Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable: Publishing in/as Literary Studies," *ELH* 75 (2008): 707–735, 721.

9 Ibid., 709.

10 Ibid.

11 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 45.

12 On the socialization of texts see Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

13 Michael Cahn, "*Opera Omnia*: The Production of Cultural Authority," in *History of Science, History of Text*, ed. Karine Chemla (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2004), 81–94, 84.

14 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 710.

15 All quotations from Heidi Paris, "Wider das Kostbare," www.heidi-paris.de/verlag/wider-das-kostbare [unless otherwise noted all translations S.A.].

16 Georg Stanitzek, *Essay–BRD* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2011), 326.

17 Jochen Stankowski and Christof Windgätter, "Der Rauten-Macher – Gespräch über den Merve Verlag," *Verpackungen des Wissens 2* (2012): 57–70, 67.

18 According to Jennifer Allen in relation to Balthaus's own works, *Artforum International* (April 2006).

19 Stefan Nowotny, "Anti-Canonization. The Differential Knowledge of Institutional Critique," in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique*, ed. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: mayflybooks, 2009), 21–28, 26.

20 Elisabeth Tonnard, *The Invisible Book*, http://elisabethtonnard.com/works/the-invisible-book.

21 Daniel Buren, "Terminologie," in *Les Écrits. 1965–2012. Vol. I: 1965–1995* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 1239–1249, 1246.

22 See Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

23 Stein Haugom Olsen, "Defining A Literary Work," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1976), 133–142, 134.

24 Liz Sales, "Interview," originally published on *Conveyor Magazine Blog* (6.12.2013), https://tonnard.files.wordpress.com/2008/03/interview_liz_sales.pdf.

25 For an overview, see Yann Toma and Rose Marie Barrientos, eds., *Les entreprises critiques = Critical Companies. La critique artiste à l'ère de l'économie globalisée: Artistic Critique in the Era of Globalized Economy* (Saint-Etienne: Cité du design, 2008).

26 Antoine Lefebvre, *WILF*, http://www.rouen.fr/wilf (emphasis mine). See also Antoine Lefebvre's contribution to this volume.

27 "While Foucault refers to heterotopia as a 'local utopia,' artistic enterprises tend to realize these utopias. We can clearly see here that their kind of being different, or other, is not a denial of reality but rather a manifestation of the artistic will to improve reality." Antoine Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur – L'edition comme pratique artistique alternative" (PhD diss., Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2014), 245f. Online http://labibliothequefantas.free.fr/index.php?/thesis.

28 Ibid., 239 and 256.

29 Antoine Lefebvre, "What? / Quoi?" http://www.labibliothequefantastique.net.

30 Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur," 226 and 213.

31 See, for instance, Michael Bhaskar's severe conclusion: "For publishers, the obvious model is the business model. From the earliest times printers and publishers were proto-capitalists, working in a capital-intensive, risk-laden environment to shift stock as quickly as possible." Michael Bhaskar, *The Content Machine. Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network* (London, New York, Delhi: Anthem, 2013), 97.

32 Lefebvre, "Portrait de l'artiste en éditeur," 277 and 276.

33 Ibid., 278.

34 Ibid., 269. See also 291f.

35 Vanessa Place and Quinn Latimer, "The Frictionless Witness or Us, Keeping Us Real," *Mousse* 40 (2013): 246–249, 248.

36 "Authors on Artists: Vanessa Place Talks with Ben Fama about VanessaPlace Inc," *bright stupid confetti* (17.7.2013), http://brightstupidconfetti.blogspot.de/2013/07/authors-on-artists-vanessa-place-talks.html.

37 "About," http://vanessaplace.biz/about.

38 No information is present about the print run.

39 Place and Latimer, "The Frictionless Witness," 248.

40 "Authors on Artists." – Klaus Scherübel achieves the same with his photo series *On Location*, where he documented the appearance of his book object *Mallarmé. The Book*, which consists solely of a cover and a Styrofoam block that has been furnished with an ISBN, in bookstores and libraries. We should also mention Badlands Unlimited, which published the short story *Holiday* in 2012 as an e-book and a sculpted stone, each with an ISBN.

41 Ibid.

42 Accompanying text to Fiona Banner, *Book 1/1* (The Vanity Press and The Multiple Store, 2009), 65 copies, block print on mirror card, 45 × 64 cm, stamped and signed, http://fionabanner.com/vanitypress/book11/index.htm.

43 "Fiona Banner questions the currency of the multiple or limited edition [...] using the democratic medium of print." Multiple Stores, "About the Edition," http://themultiplestore.org/shop/editions/fiona-banner-book-1-1.

44 The ISBN is "an important tool" not only for the classic book trade but also for libraries since it "plays an important role in the acquisition and cataloging of books." Agentur für Buchmarktstandards, "Die ISBN," http://www.german-isbn.de/isbn_start_text.html/10011.

45 The Federal Constitutional Court acknowledged in a judgment that the (non-remunerated) legal deposit is a legitimate concern for the general public and outweighs any possible (economic) disadvantage that a publisher may accrue.

46 See Margaret J. M. Ezell, "Invisible Books," in *Producing the Eighteenth-Century Book. Writers and Publishers in England, 1650–1800*, ed. Laura L. Runge and Pat Rogers (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 53–69; Peter Brantley, "The New Missing Books," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 28 (2012): 172–175.

47 The name of Banner's publishing house, Vanity Press, invokes the common stigma that self-publishers have to fight against: It is routinely suggested that their motives are purely egotistical or narcissistic and that they are of questionable aesthetic caliber. Because of the generality of this accusation it is unfounded.

48 In specifically addressing self-publishers, the German ISBN agency can thus sell its service as a guarantee for the "perceptibility" of a title "in the entire German book world." Agentur für Buchmarktstandards, "Beantragung," http://www.german-isbn.de/isbn_start_text.html/10012.

49 "There is so little interest in the avant-garde in the general population that if not for the academy, this work would be nearly invisible. [...] In fact, [...] if this work is not received in the academy, it's not received at all. I, for example, owe my career to academies and institutions; if my work is not being taught or written about, it doesn't exist." Kenneth Goldsmith, "My Career in Poetry or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Institution," *Umělec* 1 (2012).

50 This phenomenon becomes comprehensible in, for instance, Bernhard Cella's *NO-ISBN* project. See the interview with Cella but also the essay from Lucas W. Melkane in the present volume.

51 Hannes Bajohr calls the type of publishing that takes as its topic the structural, socioeconomic, and material conditions of its production "factography," see his contribution in the present volume.

52 Accompanying text to Jean Keller, *Black Book* (self-published, 2010), http://www.blurb.com/b/1768873-the-black-book. 2013 also appeared on Lulu with a higher number of pages.

53 James Goggin et al., *Dear Lulu, Please try and print these line, colour, pattern, format, texture and typography tests for us.* (self-published, 2008), also available on Blurb and MagCloud.

54 "I can easily spot books printed with Lulu. To me, their peculiar identity became appealing as much as cheap xeroxed zines." Silvio Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand—The Radical Potential of Networked Standardisation," in *Code—X. Paper, Ink, Pixel and Screen*, ed. Danny Aldred and Emmanuelle Waeckerlé (Farnham: bookRoom, 2015), 03:47–03:58, 03:48.

55 Accompanying text to Jean Keller, *Blank Book* (self-published, 2011), http://www.blurb.de/bookstore/detail/2592736-blank.

56 See "A parergon comes against, beside, and in addition to the ergon, [...] it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside." Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 54.

57 O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, 27f.

58 Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand," 03:51.

59 In passing, this series also demonstrates how the diverse formats and features structure our expectations and our dealings with the publications before we read them. As such, they also contribute to the contents of the books themselves.

60 AND Publishing, ed., *Variable Format* (London, 2012), last page of each version.

61 Eva Weinmayr, co-founder of AND Publishing, has declared this as an axiom of her artistic practice, see "One Publishes to Find Comrades," in *The Visual Event, an Education in Appearances*, ed. Oliver Klimpel (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2014), 50–59.

62 The attempt to do justice to this kind of publishing by cataloging all of the bibliographical details of this series is thus inevitably doomed to failure. The crossed out copyright line in the imprint indicates that AND Publishing doesn't assign copyright to anyone (in regards to both content and design).

63 Malik, "Horizons of the Publishable," 709.

64 Lorusso, "Print-on-Demand," 03:48.

The Social Sense of Print

Alessandro Ludovico

Newspaper as (Fake) Political Imaginary

The form of the newspaper is still one of the most recognizable. What we can consider as the modern form of newspapers has only changed slightly since the nineteenth century (except for the inclusion of pictures and colors) becoming a daily medium for quite a few generations, establishing itself as an aesthetic standard, and a defined cultural object with its specific interface. That's why artists and activists have often used newspapers as an identifiable information environment and a daily object at the same time. From Andy Warhol's *Headlines* series,[1] with huge reproductions of particularly dramatic front pages as frozen in time, to *Modern History* series by Sarah Charlesworth,[2] tracking the use of the same picture on different front page layouts. But a specific conceptual manipulation of newspapers (and the conventional ecosystem surrounding them) has been employed by artists and activists to foster specific ideas. The "fake" newspaper, which accurately reproduces a real newspaper arbitrarily changing its content, has always been able to question the instinctive trust we have in this medium (reinforced by its unchangeability on print and the editorial work behind it). If making fake copies and freely distributing them in order to attract public attention (but then revealing them as something else, such as mere advertising flyers) is a remarkably old practice, dating back to the end of the nineteenth century,[3] the conscious use of those fakes as a political medium is more recent. The "Faux Soir" was an emblematic fake issue of the well known Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, published during the Second World War in 1943 by the resistance organization Front de l'Indépendance [fig. 1]. Beyond its outstanding political value, it was incorporating the "zwanze," a characteristic form of Brussels humor.[4] There are a few further effective examples, in this respect, especially emerging in the 1970s. "Il Male"[5] stemmed during the rise of leftist political movements in Italy, and especially the "Creative Autonomism" student movement in 1977. It conducted a few campaigns through fake journalistic "scoops" (all being simultaneously plausible and surrealistic) rendered in major Italian newspapers' layouts and attached next to newsstands, sometimes generating quite harsh reactions and a lot of discussions in the streets. In the same years two other actions (officially anonymous) were accomplished. In 1979 in Poland, a fake issue of the major propaganda newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* was distributed when Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) visited his homeland, sporting the banner headline "Government Resigns, Wojtyla Crowned King."[6] And in France, in 1977, a fake *Le Monde Diplomatique* was anonymously distributed to a certain number of subscribers, featuring very satirical comments on the Rote Armee Fraktion's Stammheim Prison bloodbath.[7] Almost thirty years later, on November 12, 2008, an impressive fake newspaper

[1] Molly Donovan et al., *Warhol: Headlines* (New York: Prestel, 2011).

[2] Sarah Charlesworth, *Modern History* (Edinburgh: New 57 Gallery, 1979).

[3] "The Most Common Fake Historic Newspaper," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.historicpages.com/lincfake.htm.

[4] "Faux Soir," accessed August 11, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faux_Soir.

[5] See Vincenzo Sparagna, *Falsi da ridere: Dal Male a Frigidaire, dalla Pravda a Stella Rossa, dal Corriere all'Unità, da Repubblica al Lunedi della Repubblica* (Roma: Malatempora, 2000).

[6] Ibid.

[7] See Pasquale Alferj and Giacomo Mazzone, *I Fiori di Gutenberg* (Roma: Arcana, 1979).

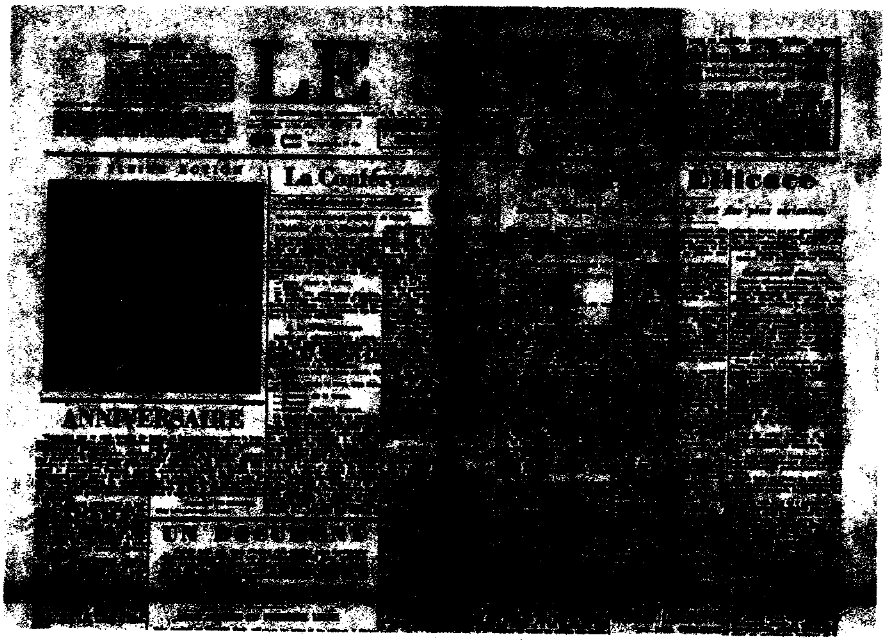

Fig. 1. "Le Faux Soir," fake issue of the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, published during the Second World War in 1943 by the resistance organization Front de l'Indépendance.

distributed in several thousand copies invaded the streets in New York City: The *New York Times Special Edition* by the Yes Men in collaboration with Steve Lambert and the Anti-Advertising Agency, and anonymously sponsored.[8] It was set in the near future (July 4, 2009), featuring only positive news, briefly plausible after Barack Obama's election as U.S. President. The *New York Times*'s layout, fonts and graphic design were painstakingly reproduced (including the usual advertisements, satirically changed as well), so the majority of the public was easily fooled. A large network of volunteers distributed it for free in the city, even in front of the *New York Times* headquarters, without any legal repercussion. What was embodied here was the public imaginary, the articulated hope this historical event generated, historicized then altogether in a stable and recognizable format, without the daily compromises of major media. The group produced another few fakes, one of them in the form of the *International Herald Tribune*. Relating somehow to "Il Male" actions, Italian artist Paolo Cirio, made a project composed by a web application, a workshop, and an action in 2011, called *inVeritas*. It was centered on Italian newspapers, inviting people to invent their own breaking news story that could be composed as a headline sheet with the newspaper logo of choice, through the project's website. Then fairly easily it was printed out and placed (during the night) near local newsstands.[9] But the use of fake newspapers in political campaigns has proven not to be a thing of the past. The classic strategy of purchasing a full front page ad, designed to look just like the real front page has been often adopted with alternating results. The Liberal Party

[8] "New York Times Special Edition," accessed August 11, 2015, http://theyesmen.org/hijinks/newyorktimes.

[9] "inVeritas," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.paolocirio.net/work/inveritas/inveritas.php.

in British Columbia did it in 2013, disguising the ad as "official" information, and so generating a whole national media case with polarized reactions about the Party ethics and the high risk of misleading the readers.[10] Furthermore, in 2011 there was a more direct political newspaper scam, where police identified a network of infringers who had been illegally producing and distributing fake copies of *Ziarul de Garda* and *Timpul*, two of Moldova's leading newspapers, trying to manipulate the public opinion ahead of elections by publishing negative articles about the pro-Western ruling coalition.[11]

Plagiarism (from Print to Digital and Vice-Versa)

Newspaper fakes incorporate some forms of "plagiarism," mostly related to misusing a "standardized" visual form. This has been technically feasible due to the mechanical reproduction of print, especially with the lightning-fast speed and accuracy of digital (re)production. But the plagiarism of content is much older, and the very concept of plagiarism dates back to the Roman Empire. It was used for the first time by Roman poet Martial, who in complaining that another poet was "kidnapping" his verses, called him "plagiarius," which literally means "kidnapper." These were the verses he used to express his feelings:

> "Fama refert nostros te, Fidentine, libellos
> non aliter populo quam recitare tuos.
> si mea vis dici, gratis tibi carmina mittam:
> si dici tua vis, hoc eme, ne mea sint."
>
> (Fame has it that you, Fidentinus,
> recite my books to the crowd as if none other than your own.
> If you're willing that they be called mine, I'll send you the poems for free.
> If you want them to be called yours, buy this one, so that they won't
> be mine.)[12]

There are plenty of more or less famous cases of literary plagiarism in history, but only some of them were publicly admitted (like the script of the TV series *Roots*, admittedly plagiarized by his author in some passages from the novel *The African*, published nine years before). In contemporaneity, plagiarism seems easier than ever, especially taking advantage from "big data" sophisticated sources like Wikipedia, and so a few critical artworks have been developed consequently. Belgian artist Stéphanie Vilayphiou investigates how free software can deeply question the fixity of the printed page once it's digitized, and how the defensive copyright practices, historically consolidated can be challenged. In particular she writes various transformative software to create controversial versions of literature classics. Specifically, in her net art piece

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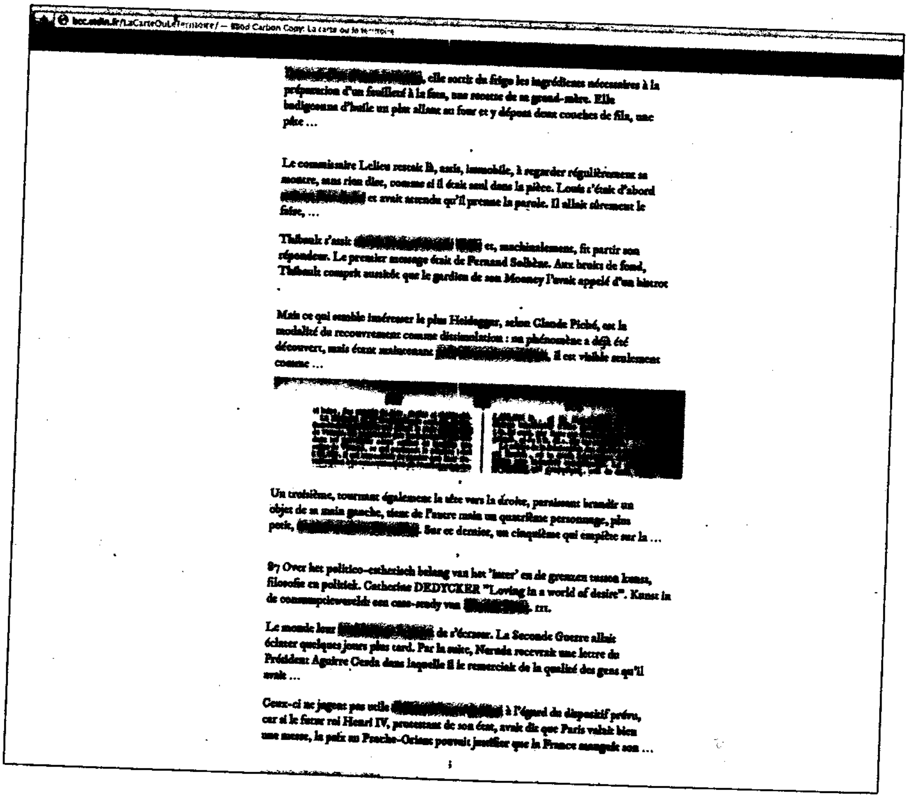
[10] "Liberals buy front-page newspaper ad touting debate win," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/05/01/bc-liberals-newspaper-ad.html.

[11] "'Fake newspapers' network dismantled in Moldova," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.b92.net/eng/news/world.php?yyyy=2011&mm=05&dd=17&nav_id=74384.

[12] Jack Lynch, "The Perfectly Acceptable Practice of Literary Theft: Plagiarism, Copyright, and the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* 24, no. 4 (winter 2002–3): 51–54.

La carte ou le territoire (*The Map or the Territory*)[13] she selected a controversial book, Michel Houellebecq's *The Map and the Territory*, which became renown and discussed in France for its evident quotes from Wikipedia, never acknowledged by the author nor by the publisher. She retrieved the book's digitized text and then wrote a software filter which parses it into sentences (or part of it) looking for them in the millions of digitized texts contained in Google Books, eventually finding the same sequence of words in other books. The results are rendered then in their original typefaces, and the parts matching Houellebecq's book are highlighted in yellow [fig. 2]. Visually the book is entirely transformed into a sequential digital collage of quotations (whose original authoritative printed context is still maintained in the background), definitively losing even the last bit of originality. Vilayphiou ultimately questions originality and authorship through software automatisms, turning them into trackable and technically demonstrable collective thinking. Another example of artistic practice deliberately using other people's writings in a specific context is Traumawien's *Ghostwriter* series.[14] The Viennese group performed a virtual "action" with their own software robots compiling and uploading hundreds of e-books on Amazon.com with text directly stolen from YouTube videos' comments, as if they were abstract dialogues. They have defined it an "auto-cannibalistic" model, and these e-books sport a very


bcc.stdin.fr/LaCarteOuLeTerritoire/ — Blod Carbon Copy: La carte ou le territoire

[illegible], elle sortit du frigo les ingrédients nécessaires à la préparation d'un feuilleté à la feta, une recette de sa grand-mère. Elle badigeonna d'huile un plat allant au four et y déposa deux couches de fila, une pâte ...

Le commissaire Leliev restait là, assis, immobile, à regarder régulièrement sa montre, sans rien dire, comme si il était seul dans la pièce. Louis s'était d'abord [illegible] et avait attendu qu'il prenne la parole. Il allait sûrement le faire, ...

Théberk s'assit [illegible] et, machinalement, fit partir son répondeur. Le premier message était de Fernand Solbène. Aux bruits de fond, Théberk comprit aussitôt que le gardien de son Mooney l'avait appelé d'un bistrot

Mais ce qui semble intéresser le plus Heidegger, selon Claude Piché, est la modalité du recouvrement comme dissimulation : un phénomène a déjà été découvert, mais étant maintenant [illegible], il est visible seulement comme ...

Un troisième, tournant également la tête vers la droite, paraissant brandir un objet de sa main gauche, tient de l'autre main un quatrième personnage, plus petit, [illegible]. Sur ce dernier, un cinquième qui empiète sur la ...

87 Over het politico-esthetisch belang van het 'inter' en de grenzen tussen kunst, filosofie en politiek. Catherine DEDYCKER "Loving in a world of desire". Kunst in de consumptiewereld: een case-study van [illegible]. III.

Le monde leur [illegible] de s'écraser. La Seconde Guerre allait éclater quelques jours plus tard. Par la suite, Neruda recevrait une lettre du Président Aguirre Cerda dans laquelle il le remerciait de la qualité des gens qu'il avait ...

Ceux-ci ne jugent pas utile [illegible] à l'égard du dispositif prévu, car si le futur roi Henri IV, protestant de son état, avait dit que Paris valait bien une messe, la paix au Proche-Orient pouvait justifier que la France mangeât son ...

Fig. 2. Stéphanie Vilayphiou, *La carte ou le territoire*, 2013, accessed November 20, 2015, http://bcc.stdin.fr/LaCarteOuLeTerritoire, screen shot.

classic paperback layout as spontaneous instant books, redirecting the endless flow of comments in a specific form and freezing them in time. This action is obviously re-contextualizing the original meanings, setting them in a new scenario and in a new literary form: from personal notes not necessarily relating each other, into a single continuous and sometimes surreal dialogue. What happens in the passage from one medium to another, is that the original spontaneousness and sometimes naïveté of the text once rendered as a book assumes the formal character of the adopted layout. The paradigm of access to "big data" is embedded in practices like the aforementioned, and the software programer's vision is the only limit to what kind of results and new (digital and printed) forms can be consequently created.

Printing as a Risky Strategy

Fakes and plagiarized works create the uneasy situation of controversial content statically reproduced and distributed in many copies. This is reinforcing the "validating" role of print, nowadays coupled with the instant and potentially extreme dissemination of information. Since the year 2000 there have been a few famous and dramatic cases of sensitive information leaks: Wikileaks and its small galaxy of information-wants-to-be-free "heroes" (Julian Assange, Bradley Manning, Edward Snowden) publishing secret or classified information from anonymous sources, and Aaron Swartz and his brave act of freeing the copyrighted academic knowledge of JSTOR[15] (Swartz committed suicide in 2013). The leaks' transmission and acquisition has been totally digital, but then traditional media has been deeply involved to make this information "public" (and implicitly to somehow certify the scale of the action with their innate "authority"), including printed ones, mainly newspapers. At a smaller scale, there are other cases using print as a tool for liberating secret information. Carl Malamud, for example, an activist dealing with the fact that vital parts of US law are secret and that you are allowed to read them only by paying quite a high amount of money, has founded Public.Resource.Org organization,[16] which digitizes, and eventually re-publishes public domain materials. He has scanned, OCRed and re-published in print, codes like the *Public safety codes of California* or the *District of Columbia Official Code* including in the print a statement that says "being law, any claim about their copyright by the authorities is 'null and void.'" Answering the question "why print copies?" Malamud says that the print edition limits distribution with none of the "side effect of infinite copy" that scares standard and legal people, thus making his efforts somehow acceptable. In this case, print is turned into a legally strategic medium of distribution, because of its slow duplication standards, as newspapers have been equally strategic for Wikileaks, being part of a clever

[13] Stéphanie Vilayphiou, "La carte ou le territoire," accessed August 11, 2015, http://espacevirtuel.jeudepaume.org/la-carte-ou-le-territoire-1834.

[14] "Ghostwriters," accessed August 11, 2015, http://traumawien.at/prints/ghostwriters.

[15] Valerie J. Nelson, "Aaron Swartz dies at 26; Internet folk hero founded Reddit," *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 2013.

[16] "Public.Resource.org," accessed August 11, 2015, https://public.resource.org.

tactic that considers the different role and weight of the respective medium, in order to seamlessly accomplish an effective distribution of the content.

Screen Touch vs. Printing Tactility

The relationship between the printed and the digitized dimension of the content can be functional, legal, aesthetic, but it's also gloriously perceptual. How many things do we physically "touch," establishing an enriched relationship with them? Not too many—but screens and printed materials are surely among them. More generally, materiality has its own space of information, which is very different from the immaterial one. The three-dimensional space of materiality is essential in locating, estimating, and recognizing cultural objects. There is a recurring comparison in the media between the convenience of using printed content in digital form versus its traditional paper format. A published work in a computer file format has a series of promoted qualities: lightness and hence portability, speed in accessing it, its (near) instant ability to be searched, quantified, linked, cross-referenced, and "calculated" in general, which makes it a terrifically tool-enforced version of the original work. But there is a constantly underestimated aspect: its "user experience," especially from a perceptual perspective, which, paradoxically, turns out to be quite "deprived" compared to the classic printed publication. Digital content uses primarily one sense: sight. Excluding taste, of course, to start there is an absence of any specific smell. Hearing may or may not be involved, and when it is, it usually appears in two different ways: print experience simulation (typically a sound sample of turning pages), and alert sounds, which are unspecific, so not contextualized to the reading experience. In fact, they belong to the more general digital interface, generally only used to attract attention about some impeding fault or give a warning about something about to happen. Sight, instead, is very involved, although the text always appears in the very same way thanks to the retro-illuminated characteristic, which is meant to ensure readability anytime, anywhere. In comparison, classic printed publications use a much richer sensorial environment, providing inputs for multiple sensory modalities. Again excluding taste, smell is quite directly involved in the composition and age of both paper and ink, indirectly giving specific information about the text because it varies a lot, even within the same olfactory domain (the scent of books spans through different degrees of dust and mold, depending on their exposure to light, specific preserving environments, composition of paper and inks, etc.). Hearing is mainly about the physical manipulation of the book, which implies the sound of bending and closing the, usually thicker, cover, which is quite different from flipping or turning the pages. Very importantly, each time we turn a page, the resulting sound is slightly different, and not really quite the same as it is in simulated digital environments. Sight, eventually, also varies extensively, print being front-illuminated and therefore depending on very different (natural or artificial) lighting conditions, with all their degrees, technologies, and filters involved. And finally touch, and thus tactility, is just reinforcing this comparison. In the digital realm we merely have a functional and decontextualized touch: if we still use mouse or trackpad "prosthetics," our fingers are functionally used for clicking, swiping, or tapping in the very same way for all the different types of content, but in a standardized universal modality, which, again, cannot be conceptually unplugged from the inescapable design of digital interfaces. In the digital realm our fingertips are simply annihilated, even if they possess the highest concentration of touch receptors and thermoreceptors of all the areas of the human skin, aside from our genital parts.[17] From being extremely sensitive and "broadband" input sources for our body they become neutral machine-oriented prosthetics. In traditional print tactility gives information on different levels, and the process of paper selection is, in fact, still an important part of quality publishers' work. It gives information about color (sight), texture (touch), and odor (smell) that is, possibly, consistent with the whole of the work. If we are already familiar with a book, the texture of its cover unconsciously gives us information about its content (confirming what we are about to read) even before we open it, and eventually we would be able to recognize certain books while being blindfolded. Every added element (lamination of any type, hollow punches, special inks) is not just an additional piece of information, but a further experience that is perceived by both sight and touch. Our senses are constructed to have a "very large bandwidth," and "sense" is derived from the Latin word "sensus" that, in this respect, means "faculty of feeling," which is all but mechanical. Tactility, as any other sense, is about perceiving differences, and the more differences we are trained to perceive, the more we learn and the more we are able to perceive, in a virtuous endless circle. On the other side, even state of the art digital publications are still a "simulation" of the printed ones (like the classic PDF standard), in a quite ambiguous trajectory. They mimic the structure and conventions of print, adapting them to the needed digital parameters, but they probably fail in re-creating a similar experience, and trying to appeal to sight as much as possible, including, for example, the visually compelling fast zooming (in and out) abilities. The screen has uniquely flexible qualities, but it can't effectively render three-dimensional space if not through a simulation which our senses, in any case, know is flattened. It is how French researcher Émeline Brulé defines the digital simulation of print: "mimetism."

So since the senses are deeply involved, we often make an emotional investment in cultural objects and we don't want to lose this investment in the enormous size of the digital space, experienced through a small bi-dimensional screen. Digital publications, being prone to the screen, would have to cope with this aspect of their own nature, but, in turn, they would also exploit their unique ability of hosting infinitely reprogrammable and infinitely transmittable content. Instead of simulating the (unsurpassed) print "interface," which has been gloriously established and refined since more than five centuries, they would build on the ability to instantly create, combine, and calculate content, trying to accomplish an intimacy between writer and reader similar to the one that McLuhan attributes to printed materials. And, if properly handled, tactility could play a fundamental role in this process, even if there is no simple equation to fill the gap between the machine and our fingertips. In robotics, for example, the still primitive "tactile sensors"[18] are devices measuring information derived from physical interaction with their environment, but they are generally modeled after the biological sense of cutaneous touch, and they are definitely uncertain, for example, when it comes to sensing "pain." In digital publications tactility would be enhanced in a proper way, avoiding clumsy simulations, and appealing instead to our nerve endings in a direct way, maybe through interconnected new artificial materials. They would provide new information to the screen reader, being eventually able to materially assume a decent number of textures or "states" that were unperceived before, appropriately reflecting their possibly direct and instinctual relationship with the content. Then, the two different worlds would begin to be comparable, and even a hypothetical hybrid between them could begin to be conceived. It would be in direct relationship with our senses, but simultaneously be able to reflect both the stability of the printed page and the perennial dance of information in our digital world.

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[17] "Finger," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finger.

The Library, Ultimate Cultural Center vs. Big Data Repository

> [Libraries] are nerve centres of intellectual energy. [...] knowledge is power [...] and that power should be disseminated and not centralised.
>
> **Robert Darnton, Harvard University library director**[19]

The physical library and its virtual counter model are the crucial spaces where the discourse about the new relationships between traditional and digital publishing is taking place. On one side the "global virtual library" is closer than ever, with Google investments worth millions of dollars, to digitizing millions of books in Google Books, and with plenty of other similar efforts at different scales, including some remarkably vast, independent, and shared. On the other end, the physical library's historical value as meeting and research space for citizens is simultaneously reclaimed and challenged. Funding cuts and innuendos about its obsolescence in the digital era, are dramatically permeating both common sense and institutional policies. Some libraries are reinforcing their role through digital initiatives, like the Toronto Public Library, which launched a Fahrenheit 451-themed alternate reality game, where people where invited to play it in the city through telephone calls with the motto "Join the literary resistance."[20] And the push on libraries to "reinvent themselves" can effectively be rethought taking the exchange of physical books as

[18] "Tactile Sensor," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactile_sensor.

[19] "Google and the world brain," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.worldbrainthefilm.com, http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=google-and-the-world-brain.

[20] "Take Your Seashells Out of Your Ears! No Media Kings," accessed August 11, 2015, http://nomediakings.org/games/take-your-seashells-out-of-your-ears.html.

a starting point to expand the knowledge in new directions, creating less conventional models for that. So beyond platforms like BookCrossing,[21] using a web-based platform and a simple social mechanism to share books in public places, the main question seems to be about which social role the exchange of knowledge can implement. For example there are different efforts to build what could be defined as a "spontaneous citizen library." There are attempts on a small scale like the Little Free Libraries,[22] a few thousands wood boxes scattered around the world where people can take or leave books, or Ourshelves,[23] a San Francisco lending library open to everyone, with almost 300 members and 3,000 volumes, built around its community, with plans to replicate its model around the city.[24] And if we take into account that Wikipedia has specific templates to add information to its pages regarding the availability of related content in local libraries,[25] spontaneous social mechanisms connected to a self-managed physical exchange can be easily enabled. These kind of initiatives can question the library as a centralized facility, reconfiguring it as the outcome of a community, opening new possibilities. Teaching how to digitize books, for example, could dramatically expand access, especially to forgotten titles which Google Books won't include or give access to for different reasons. People involved should then assume responsibility in scanning and sharing, on a personal and independent level, to build their own cultural history, preserving (physically) and sharing (digitally) all the knowledge that they think is valuable, as it has been done with music since the early 2000s.

Conclusions

The historical importance of the printed page as a medium still has a great influence on cultural dynamics, and still maintains a different role from the digital. Its critical tradition continues to be fostered by artists and activists, sometimes virtuously combined with "big data" and the infinite programmability of the digital, maximizing the potential of the respective qualities of those two mediums. The most effective radical efforts has been historically supported by an innovative use of media and technologies, which has grounded the vision of new social and cultural models. The re-appropriation of the public imaginary through printed fakes, the plagiarized use of online content in print, the awareness of the sense of involvement in the respective media environments, the ability to create social libraries, and the enormous sharing of digitalized content, can structurally redefine the printed medium, largely increasing its weight and potential across the media landscape, and redefining it as a crucial opportunity to rethink our relationship with knowledge, from both a contemporary and historical perspective.

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[21] "Welcome to Book-Crossing," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.bookcrossing.com.

[22] "Little Free Library," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.littlefreelibrary.org.

[23] "Ourshelves," http://ourshelves.org. Sequel Project is the latest iteration of Ourshelves, see http://www.sequelproject.org/ourshelves-our-history/, accessed October 30, 2015.

[24] "Citizen Libraries Are The New Home For The Printed Word," accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.fastcoexist.com/1681736/citizen-libraries-are-the-new-home-for-the-printed-word?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pulsenews.

[25] "Template: Library resources box," accessed August 11, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Library_resources_box.

Bad Workers:

Notes on the Socius and the Book

K. Antranik Cassem, Matt Longabucco, and Rachel Valinsky

The authors of these texts are friends and co-founders of a library and reading room in Brooklyn called Wendy's Subway. Stemming from a collective inquiry into the sociality of books, each text sets a different scene, pitched to the tune of each writer's voice, yet conceived of together in dialogue, over the course of many conversations. Several key texts formed the crux of our collective reflections, including those by Condorelli and Rancière, cited below. They helped to gather our thoughts around different forms of labor, theories of friendship, and social spaces of gathering (both physical and intellectual), often taking the publication as a site for such manifestations. Our library—its collection's focus on art, poetry, and theory—is the nexus of our styles, our affects. These texts take the invitation to "publish together" as an invitation to consider publishing's sociality as a form of artistic practice.

> One of my favourite examples is Jacques Rancière's 'bad' workers—all those militant poets, artists, and workers in the 1830s and 40s who formed these little friendship circles, hanging out together and trying to figure out how to lead a life in which they didn't have to be a worker. *La nuit des prolétaires: Archives du rêve ouvrier* is my favourite book of Rancière's. It is a very beautifully researched and written book and it is also very mischievous. Rather than finding one's freedom or liberation in the degraded terms in which you are oppressed, these workers rejected the whole workerist ideology that dominated political thinking then (and still does to a large extent). They said: 'we want to paint, to write poetry, to philosophise, to wander around thinking about the world, about beauty, about ...'
> **Avery F. Gordon, in *The Company She Keeps***

K. Antranik Cassem

The space of the bad worker, the instigator, and the survivor is both a Borgesian library and a living room floor. Timelessly, the three of them write, talk, seek beauty, and face death in a life outside work that eventually amalgamates into a congruency about ... hope? Within this space is a contrast between a lived life and a working life; or, a conscious existence and a mechanical labor of economy—an undead life. The bad worker embodies hope for an immaterial life—or one fulfilled by conscious action undetermined by state, social, or cultural normativities—in a transformative space, where alteration and reclamation become indistinguishable as history profligates and leaves unanswered questions behind. Who remembers the workers, the revolutionaries behind the name, the meetings, councils, soldiers, corpse washers, wanderers, poets, insurgents, derelict stock traders,

Rachel Valinsky

The problem with two writers writing at once, is of course similar to the problem of a writer sitting in an armchair. As the artist Moyra Davey describes it, in reading, quickly the armchair becomes the seat of the most incongruous, illogical, and uncomfortable contortions intended to accommodate the body of the multifarious, note-taking subject: at once reader, writer, and sitter.[13] We need this discomfort, the body reaching outside of itself through a new, ungraceful, or unexpected physical subject position, for the contiguous experience of one writer with another to emerge. It is to read and write *with*, rather than *alongside* or *in the margins of.* Pouring into Louise Bourgeois's 2008 Guggenheim Museum exhibition catalog, Davey and Bourgeois work together, that is, they interrupt each other—"I took notes from the book, and at some point my own diary notes began to filter in."[14] These interruptions are productive instigators. Our agitators.

Matt Longabucco

About ... transience? Geoffrey O'Brien's beautiful essay, "The Secret Life of Objects,"[32] explores French director Olivier Assayas's 2008 film *Summer Hours* (*L'Heure d'été*). Describing the film, O'Brien is alert to the way it conveys a subtle but persistent sense of life moving too quickly to be grasped by any of the characters, a French family disposing of an inherited country house and the art objects (made and collected by their uncle) it contains. This "relentless forward motion"[33] of events is in some respect banal, and we must be struck by the fact that the characters are "astonished, as people generally are, that the inevitable in fact comes to pass."[34] At the same time, we suffer with them a thousand little shocks as when, for example, we watch one sibling back down to the others' wishes and thereby allow the storied, irreplaceable house to be sold. Deaths, farewells, and childhoods pass without closure or completion. Meanwhile, the objects of the family's legacy, which include artists' notebooks, valuable furniture, a pair of Corot paintings, and a Degas sculpture, travel piecemeal to their own far-flung destinies. Does faceless migrants and detainees, or librarians; who remembers us? Lest we forget that "every name in history is I."[1] To hold back the undead, to "fight the anonymity with which the war enemy is killed even by precision bombing, the soldier has to receive, from their state of being already dead, the calls of the unknown persons who will soon be murdered by him."[2] Such is the space for the undead, unknown, unwilling, unfortunates.

Young Jawad sketches his father's face with great detail as he works in a *mghaysil,* a wash house. The protagonist of Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* (2013), Jawad works on his craft as he learns the art of washing the dead before they are buried. His relentless sketching and desire for more cause him to leave a position held by generations of his family to attend Art School: he is a bad worker. Alas as history presents itself, he is forced back

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As in John Cage's famous proclamation in a conversation with Morton Feldman on the problem of the radio in the environment—a constant intrusion to his experience—disruption proves to be productive: "Well, you know how I adjusted to that problem of the radio in the environment. [...] I simply made a piece using radios. Now, whenever I hear radios, even a single one, not just twelve at a time, I think well, they're just playing my piece [...] and I listen to it with pleasure. By pleasure, I mean, I notice what happens—I can attend to it, and become interested in the ... well, what it actually is that you're interested in, is what superimposed what, what happens at the same time, together with what happens before and what happens after."[15] I read out loud to him, and he interrupts me to write something down—one thought and then another. Reading together is also writing together. This is the problem with two writers writing at once.

O'Brien articulate, as his title promises, these objects' "secret life"? It involves, he says, their power to transmit history, to be that much more real than all those half-articulated feelings and relations among the people who intersect or even create them. "In this process of objects moving from hand to hand and generation to generation," O'Brien writes, "the living people can be seen in a certain light as mere accessories. When art becomes for once not the background or clue or symptom but the central focus of a story, it turns into something eerie and incomprehensible."[35] They are "signposts, these artifacts, to places no longer there, just as the film itself is a map of disappearances and transmutations. Everything is always dissolving."[36]

That same relentlessness is at work, in its quietly implicit way, in my favorite Assayas film, *Late August, Early September* (*Fin août, début septembre,* 2008). The film centers on a group of friends and lovers in Paris, and more closely on the relationship between Gabriel (Mathieu Amalric) and Adrien (François Cluzet), the latter a novelist diagnosed, at age 40, with an

K. Antranik Cassem

to the washhouse after years of training, finding love and community. Despite individual accomplishment, the throes of dictatorship leave his and many other lives up to the course of war. The bad worker is the one who languishes under what could have been to survive in what is. As history pushes forward, Jawad witnesses those who once frequented cafes and libraries depart for lands of an unknown tongue. Who will remember Jawad or the real booksellers killed on al-Mutanabbi Street?[3] Or the books destroyed by ISIS in Mosul? Or mark the many great libraries burned in the greatest sins of humanity, Sarajevo, Baghdad, Hunan, Phnom Penh, among so many more? What is the weight of paper once it has burned or "the weight of light"?[4] "And now—now all I can do is light a cigarette and go home. My god, I just remembered that we die. But—but me too?! Don't forget that for now it's strawberry season. Yes."[5]

Rachel Valinsky

We are coming to language, with the notion that language necessarily denotes a coming together through the sociality of language itself. Here language creates the conditions of possibility for sociality, for a commons built around texts, publications, libraries, bookstores, readings, and performances: those spaces of gathering that hold bodies in a room. Mexico City-based performer and choreographer Juan Francisco Maldonado describes the library through the choreography of bodies, where space itself becomes a body that performs the principle of organizing movement and the dynamics of other bodies which inhabit it and which themselves contain systems, multitudes, capable of further organizing information (books, sentences, words).[16] This organizing principle, at the heart of the book's activity, is its sociality: it is the system we build together and apart, the codes we decode and unravel, embrace and disavow, move and think between:

Matt Longabucco

unnamed terminal illness that fells him two-thirds of the way through the story. Gabriel looks up to Adrien, and tries to help him in his career, even as we see him several times wounded by the older man's reticence. Ailing Adrien is forthcoming, however, about his fear that his limited success comes from an inability to truly connect to readers. He worries he never broke through, never went far enough to make his novels lasting works of art. After Adrien's death, Gabriel hears some colleagues discussing Adrien's posthumously published final novel with glowing admiration. He finds himself echoing Adrien, arguing to the younger men that the book is less than great. And yet Gabriel, in the film's final scene, tells an editor he is finally writing a novel of his own. When she asks about its progress, he tells her, and himself, that he doesn't know yet: "We'll see if I make it to the end." Even this circumspect hope is unexpected for Gabriel, portrayed throughout by Amalric with darting eyes and a body always twisting toward the door, perpetually unsettled. As in *Summer Hours*, Assayas shows us in both grand and offhand

In Clarice Lispector's novel *The Hour of the Star* (1971), the reader follows a woman as she loves and thinks and attempts to find a life for herself between her working and waking life. Her name is emboldened in history beyond work in seeking something different and unique. A pursuit enshrined by a commenting narrator hoping for the best and fascinated by her wanderings outside of what was deemed normal. Her account rises forward from the very onset of the universe, "All the world began with a yes. One molecule said yes to another and life was born."[6] From this, we are reminded that life is a luxury and that "overturning the world begins at an hour when ordinary workers ought to be enjoying the peaceful slumber of those whose trade calls for no thought whatever."[7] Beyond which lies individual disillusionment and some bitterness about wage labor, social dysfunction, debt, death,

"If the book is traditionally seen as the preferred medium for private consumption and research, and the gallery is understood as the space for public exhibition and performance, the library—as the public place of reading—is thus a hybrid site for performing the book."[17] This performance is undeniably plural, invariably social.

Location: Ulises Carrión's bookstore in Amsterdam, Other Books and So (it's 1975). Almost forty years later, artist Kristen Mueller names her publishing imprint after it: & So (it's 2014). In proportion to the shrinking of the location's name, the possibilities for what precedes the last two words grow. From bookstore for artists' books, to artist book publisher, to a simple syntax of relationality. We could arrive at So and So, a mirroring structure that suggests the very relation of the structure's constituent parts: reader and reader, reader and publication, publication and social space of

strokes how (almost) everything remains, seemingly by chance, unsaid and undone. Leaving a gathering just after Adrien's death, Gabriel offers a ride to his former girlfriend, who still loves him. Emotions are raw: the scene is set for a meaningful encounter. But another friend pulls up—he's driving across Paris in her direction, can he give her a lift? Gabriel shrugs, the moment gone before it materializes, never to be revisited.

Bad workers? In Assayas's films, the characters hustle, scrape, and compromise. Gabriel takes a job working on an encyclopedia, then gets defensive when Adrien refuses a commission that would impose on his writing time. In *Summer Hours*, one brother, trying to get ahead at his firm, has agreed to move his family to China. Their sister trots the globe, freelancing. A house in the French countryside means more for its promise to finance these siblings' next moves than it ever could for its heritage or continuity. Adrien waxes bitterly about the lack of money that constricted his hopes. He tells Gabriel the story of spending the royalties from his first novel on

K. Antranik Cassem

decay, and a bare need to subsist. Every day spent on the material life for cash as the worker. The worker must sleep early and rise to labor. Workers undergo the rigor of dysfunction as an act of humiliation. Solace must then come from the bad worker within the space of the commons, ducking away from servitude and dysfunction. Yet, as the label *worker* fades, the bad worker finds herself in the good and bad company of nameless persons who together transfigure into immaterial survival. Aptly put by Appius Claudius Caecus, "Every person is the artifex of their destiny."[8] Places of gathering become moments of personal insurrection and define nuances in intellectual and personal development. Material spaces move in flux as libraries, bookstores, and cafes in the public realm carry into homes and workplaces where gatherings continue.

Rachel Valinsky

its distribution, reader and social space. What cannot be done without is the coordinating conjunction, the fundamental "and" which is the organizing principle of the book, and the embodiment of its call to sociality: a precondition.

Try to write a history of sociality that reaches back around, turns, that is effectively trans-chronological, that is a history of friendship, affinity, solidarity, and community emerging from the "social life of the book."[18] It would have to be a history that refuses diachronic teleologies, that doesn't hold people together in place immovably, as if words were set in stone. For Jacques Derrida, language arrives at its destination when the message has been carried across, delivered: when it reaches its recipient.[19] But there is always the possibility of a confusion of recipients, of messages being crossed and sometimes lost, of the double-sided postcard addressed to two

Matt Longabucco

a Joseph Beuys drawing, and of the exhilaration such freedom brought him. After his death the drawing, according to his wishes, and against the cautions of some of his survivors, finds its way into the hands of the sixteen-year-old girl he loved. Assayas has elsewhere romanticized art and radical politics, telling the story of his coming to filmmaking in the crucible of '68. But these mature films aren't so sure: the precarity of art and artist alike are real, in them. Did Adrien compromise too much? What about that final novel, the one he wrote in the shadow of his own looming death sentence? Will it last? Will it transmit?

And Adrien even *looks* like Roberto Bolaño (the wire-framed glasses, the modest mane), who goes leagues farther than Assayas in noticing/notching those moments of accelerated departure and forever-to-remain-unfinished business. *The Savage Detectives*' peripatetic exiles diffidently part ways, again and again, to the deadpan refrain, "After that I never saw him again." The young poet who narrates the first and third parts of the

Alas, a varying decay arises between the destruction of home and the wandering abyss of wage labor. A treading line of resurrection as stable as Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker* takes the misbegotten through "the zone." As necessities of survival are not as simple as staying up late twist into a non-linear need. History and cultural memory accompany the wanderings of fleeing workers from colony to metropole. As the Lebanese poet and visual artist Etel Adnan writes in *Paris, When It's Naked:*

> "A lot of immigrants work in factories and create a major problem: how to make them work without having them breathe our air, live in our cities, or look at our wives and husbands? This equation has not been solved. They go on with their menial jobs, genuinely happy to make a living. They love rain, asphalt, warm bread, goat cheese, industrial oils, long grocery hours.

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different locations (who will receive it?). So instead, try to write a history of sociality that is incidental, tentative, what Madeline Gins and Shūsaku Arakawa would call a *landing site,* on which we rest briefly if only to drift again, when the next line is drawn or the next word is written.[20] Like Aby Warburg's library, a historical framework that is based on the law of the good neighbor, on sympathetic resonances, shifting understandings: a cataloging system that forgets, invents, makes unlikely connections, doesn't hold still. It is to say that the book organizes bodies transculturally and transgenerationally, that the book is the very object of our closeness.

Our closeness is also our delay. Moyra Davey does this best: "Mary Wollstonecraft, born in 1759, ten years after Goethe and two hundred years before my sister Claire, was Wet and Dry."[21] Claire is as unlikely a candidate as any to share the same breath as Wollstonecraft, or Goethe, for that

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novel claims to have written an entire book. But toward the end of the novel's long middle section, which travels twenty years into the future through the odd-angled accounts of scores of characters, a scholar reports that he's never heard of either the young poet or his work. Somehow the group of poets to which he belonged, while remembered, could not ferry him along into a future no one, it turns out, managed to anticipate and prepare for, though what could be more inevitable than time and loss? Bolaño's stories ooze with the "eerie and incomprehensible" aura of the art object made central, the poem that is as often simply erased as it is hurled with desperate ambition into the future. As he writes,

> "For a while, Criticism travels side by side with the Work, then Criticism vanishes and it's the Readers who keep pace. The journey may be long or short. Then the Readers die one by one and the Work continues on alone, although a new Criticism and new Readers gradually fall into step with it along its path. Then Criticism dies again and the Readers die again and

> They see work as energy and life. People think it's incongruous that they smile in traffic jams."[9]

Such "vindictive" smiling hides a deeper well of memories etched into the walls, as being a bad worker is what it takes to survive. What comes contains a consistent dismantling of self and personhood at the expense of history and present. Language, literature, art, colloquialisms, and theory digest through prior convictions that in the "statehood" home would always be preserved. As home dies, the migrant becomes displaced and then assimilated. Ceaselessly beholden to other ways of living, the bad worker contains meaning beyond economy and in the social, becomes the bad citizen, the bad child, the bad person. A reckoning that occurs through work, deeds, and conversation. One, codified in the bond of word,

matter. I'm asking, what does it mean to write everyone (anyone) into the same sentence? Our intimacy is this tracing of historical constellations, our asynchronic lives rendered synchronic through the echolocated word. As Mary's life, family, and friends grow around her like so many specks on a blank screen, so does Davey's story. Soon the pamphlet is a room replete with bodies; our ghosts are also in our sentences.

In her striking book of conversations on friendship—which we are all reading together—Céline Condorelli takes up Hannah Arendt quoting Cicero (the multiplication of quotation as the proliferating recesses of intimacy): "the company that one chooses to keep, in the present as well as in the past," as a powerful reformulation of the conditions for producing culture.[22] For Condorelli, reimagining culture as that which is constituted through the choices we make about "which books to read and refer to,

> the Work passes over a trail of bones on its journey toward solitude. To come near the work, to sail in her wake, is a sign of certain death, but new Criticism and new Readers approach her tirelessly and relentlessly and are devoured by time and speed. Finally the Work journeys irremediably alone in the Great Vastness. And one day the Work dies, as all things must die and come to an end: the Sun and the Earth and the Solar System and the Galaxy and the farthest reaches of man's memory. Everything that begins as comedy ends as tragedy."[37]

I write a poem. It is imbued, for me, with the feeling it enshrines and the miracle (as easy to say: the commonplace accidents) of its composition. Quickly and repeatedly it becomes clear that these qualities of the poem are not present to others as such. And yet, they sometimes leave a mysterious trace that registers, however garbled, in transmission. Every response—appreciation and dismissal alike—has this quality of misprision. And, too, the poem may have been written in some special, perhaps secret, relation place, and friendship through frustration and peace; or outwardly as Etel again writes,

> "Dear Parents, why did you lie to me? You told me the sky was blue while we watched it together, in Beirut, by the sea, and the sunset was a flame. You fooled a whole generation, then you destroyed it, the city is destroyed. The sky is not high either, as you taught me, it is so low, low, below my ceiling. I wonder if the rain will come in and spoil my books as it does my bones. I feel them, tonight, these bones you gave me."[10]

And so it is in Baghdad. So it is in many places where the weight of light can be measured. Where being a bad worker is as necessary as smiling in traffic. Finding ways to preserve language and memory. Coming together to

or whom to work and think with"[23] provides a framework for the socius' movement within a sociocultural complex built on friendship and structures of productive or nonproductive intimacy. These structures expand beyond culture-producing choices and alliances, to further take root in the "material labour and intimate affections"[24] that accompany social life. The publication is none other than the site of such allegiances, binding them together in one open volume. There is no distinction to be made between the book and the formation of a common field. The book is this landing site for bodies and intellects.

In keeping each other company, we are also bad workers, necessarily so. Evenings on end pass and our work does not describe productive labor. We do not publish, sometimes we do not even write. Our books—unwritten—sit gathering dust like Giacometti's disappearing figures. We

to another. This other may have received it upon completion, or just as likely years after the fact. Such an exchange might precipitate a communication—this week, next year, in five years. But relations surprise us (they shouldn't) by changing: the likeliest outcome is that the communication will never occur at all. The graph of its likelihood describes a sickening plummet into an abyss beyond the chart's fathoms, into the darkness where we lost that good-looking pair of dice. The poem is, all the while, on its own heedless journey. This was the price of its completion.

Debt piles up, exponentially faster than the stack of completed poems. CAN MY FRIENDS HELP? CAN I HELP THEM? We don't know if we are doing the right work. We can no longer identify the status of our "community"—and anyway its parameters and personnel keep shifting. Curators seem to post readings we'd swear we already attended a year ago, two years ago, longer. It's hard to say if the work being attended to will last, or if a given book, hot off the press, will prove a treasure or drift into neglect.

K. Antranik Cassem

navigate “the zone” and, in overlapping cultures, to deny labor distinctly, either by pain of anguish or right of refusal.

An experiment in meaning-creation. Small conversations, games of chance on sidewalks late at night, pushing against a consistent humiliation to make life just bearable and in doing so providing sustenance.

> “Fundamentally, it was anguish at the daily theft of their time as they worked wood or stone, sewed clothing or stitched shoes; and all for nothing but the indefinite maintenance of forces both of servitude and of domination. It was the humiliating absurdity of having to beg day after day for work which frittered their lives away.”[11]

This cornerstone of being a good worker to meet the demand of survival seemingly preserves undead life. However, with a persistent need

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Rachel Valinsky

throw out or sell or give away our books because we cannot write with the writings of others around us.[25] Or worse, we gather at night in our libraries surrounded by the books we have not given away or sold or thrown out, and still we do not write. These are the nights of the immaterial, the nights of propagation. “Love is exchanged only for love, which makes the exchange only by giving itself without reckoning: an overflowing current, a whirlwind, a giddiness; a community of excess beyond the disappointments of contract and gratitude,”[26] writes Jacques Rancière on the formation of small, alternative groups of French proletarians gathering outside of wage-earning hours in the 1830s and 40s. He continues: it is the “complicity of friendship, the resonance of like to like, the openness to the universal conspiration of harmonies” that the workers seek, with abandon, outside of the institutions of religion, matrimony, and work. So that in the late hours

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Matt Longabucco

Who is going to carry whom forward? What partnership, what circle is capable of producing and championing, explicating and influencing, translating and archiving all this ephemeral labor? The questions are banal—of course these relationships will change and end, since all relationships change and end. And yet these same questions occupy me, and us, endlessly, and of course the ordinary and inevitable astonishes us. I saw a young poet—an apparent magus—read in a room full of a hundred people who hung on his every word, and everyone expected, I think, that the performance would be repeated, if not topped. I understand it now to have marked the end of something, and don’t yet understand what else, at the same time, might have begun, there or elsewhere, to end still elsewhere, parallel to other beginnings. A friend used to ask, having spent a hundred nights drinking till dawn with poets, *if we’d ever get around to having a real conversation about poetry*. The promise of it seemed to fuel each night, but the imagined conversation always seemed to wait on the next cigarette, the next bar, the to live and breathe, the good worker may be dissuaded to be in bed by 10 pm only to work one more morning, and in so doing, reclaim life. Alternatively, the unemployed who live without the structure of institutions or wages may sit in the library or bookstore, saving money, before continuing on to friends and comrades where discussion ensues; or so simply commiserate over all that is without. All this simply to breathe in spaces away from the rigor of the world that perpetually compresses until life is spent or taken.

Such spaces have a capacity that, though they cannot disrupt oppressive economy or society, engage in a spiritual act from molecule agreeing with molecule to specific instances that draw people away from the iron cage of existence. Here, time is sequestered outside of work to create and do, without ever needing an ability to truly leave capital at all. In this sense of their leisurely respite, rather than solicit other workers to proselytize to for the cause, three friends set out "incomplete in causality, rich in memories, happy with the future … taking joy in one and the same thought but plunged into solitude."[27]

Our three friends sit in the library ("unitive threeness"),[28] falling off the same dingy benches that have needed mending more than once in their brief lifespan. They sit together, read apart, or, plunged as they are in their individual practices, emerge from time to time, to read a line out loud, to write frantically on a scrap of paper. Theirs is the formation of a burning "demon of learning"[29] (we could also call it a furious form of "study" with the help of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney).[30] They are bad workers and bad debtors, because they are running away from work so that you can't come running after them with credit; because when they're next bed, the arrival of the new book, the tracking down of the obscure volume, the fast-escaping ether of a reading, a future of low rent and paid debts, achieved work and sober reflection.

Bad worker: doesn't know the value of what she's making. THUNK. Two friends: a pair of dice racing across the table. THUNK. Incomprehensible object: it faces away from us no matter where we stand. THUNK. True conviction: never quite formulated, let alone expressed. THUNK. In the other room, makeshift walls and ill-fitting door, Kristen is binding books with a periodic THUNK. Tequila on the table, Mac and Kevin, music. Adjua comes in, she's just seen the new documentary on the Black Panthers, Cornel West and Harry Belafonte were at the screening. West, she reports, ascribes the electricity in the eyes of everyone involved in the movement to the fact that all were inculcated with an "undying love of community"—the only power, he says, with which to undo the fear that imprisons every subject from the bottom to the top of the hierarchies we live by. Is our love for one

K. Antranik Cassem

a commons is an unideological premise; it is a survivalist notion, for what beings endowed with consciousness aspire simply to be workers? As one holds back against becoming undead, it is in friendships, wanderings, and moments outside of a punch clock that hope is embraced in such a simple practice, "hanging out together and trying to figure out how to lead a life in which [we don't] have to be a worker."[12] In which despite everything, in the bonds of friendship we may begin again and create anew.

Rachel Valinsky

there they are not workers—they are studying and that is a bad habit that cannot be shaken off, especially after hours. They will come here and study because "they are building something in there, something down there, a different kind of speculation, a speculation called 'study,' a debt speculation, a speculative mutuality. Mutual debt, unpayable debt, unbounded debt, unconsolidated debt, debt to each other in a study group, to others in a nurses' room, to others in barbershops, to others in a squat, a dump, the woods, a bed, an embrace."[31]

Matt Longabucco

another, perhaps, an object in its own right? We'll all fail and fall away—nothing could be more certain—but could we, in or above our activity, make a love to transcend and outlive us, send it high enough and bright enough to be visible from another horizon, off in some other direction, whichever way the future wandered off while we were so busy trying to map the bewildering present—you might just as well try to catalog the fog ...

1 Jalal Toufic, *Forthcoming* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 16.

2 Ibid.

3 The intellectual center of Baghdad, which is historically full of cafes and bookstores and was partially destroyed in a devastating suicide bombing in March, 2007.

4 Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*, trans. Giovanni Pontiero (New York: New Directions, 1992), 77.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid, 1.

7 Jacques Rancière, "Preface to *Proletarian Nights* [1981]," trans. Noel Parker, in *The Everyday Life Reader*, ed. Ben Highmore (London: Routledge, 2002), 247.

8 Appius Claudius Caecus, *Sententiæ*. Originally: "Every Man is the artifex of his destiny." Altered by the author to be made gender neutral.

9 Etel Adnan, *Paris, When It's Naked* (Sausalito: The Post-Apollo Press, 1993). Quoted in Ammiel Alcalay, "Our Memory Has No Future: On Etel Adnan," in *Memories of Our Future: Selected Essays 1982–1999* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1999), 143.

10 Ibid.

11 Rancière, "Preface to *Proletarian Nights*," 247.

12 Avery F. Gordon, "The Company We Keep, part one," in *The Company She Keeps* (London: Book Works/Chisenhale Gallery; Eindhoven: Van Abbenmuseum, 2014), 38.

13 Moyra Davey, "LB, MP, MD," in *Interiors*, ed. Johanna Burton, Lynne Cooke, and Josiah McElheny (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College; Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 265.

14 Ibid.

15 John Cage, "John Cage and Morton Feldman in Conversation," Radio Happening recorded at WBAI, New York City, 1966–1967.

16 Performance over Skype by Juan Francisco Maldonado, Saturday, June 27, 2015 at Wendy's Subway in Brooklyn, New York.

17 Anna-Sophie Springer, "Melancholies of the Paginated Mind: The Library as Curatorial Space," in *Fantasies of the Library*, ed. Anna-Sophie Springer and Etienne Turpin (Berlin: K. Verlag Press, 2015), 7.

18 The phrase is borrowed from Paris-based castillo/corrales, whose imprint, Paraguay Press, publishes a series of commissioned texts as short, saddle-stitched, uniformly designed pamphlets under the collection title: *The Social Life of the Book*. castillo/corrales's program and mission have been particularly influential for us.

19 See Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

20 See Shūsaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *The Mechanism of Meaning* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988).

21 Moyra Davey, *The Wet and the Dry*, ed. castillo/corrales (Paris: Paraguay Press, 2011), 19.

22 Céline Condorelli, "Too Close to See: Notes on Friendship. A Conversation with Johan Frederik Hartle," in *The Company She Keeps* (London: Book Works/Chisenhale Gallery; Eindhoven: Van Abbenmuseum, 2014), 16.

23 Johan Frederik Hartle, "Too Close to See," 16.

24 Ibid.

25 Jean Genet, quoted in *The Selected Writings of Jean Genet*, ed. Edmund White (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1993), 215. Cited in Moyra Davey, *Burn the Diaries* (Philadelphia: ICA, University of Pennsylvania; New York: Dancing Foxes Press; Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst, 2014), 14–15.

26 Jacques Rancières, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France*, trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 114.

27 Ibid, 115.

28 Ibid, 114–115.

29 Ibid, 141.

30 See Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "Debt and Study," *e-flux journal* 14 (March 2010), accessed September 10, 2015, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/debt-and-study.

31 Ibid.

32 Geoffrey O'Brien, "The Secret Life of Objects," in *Stolen Glimpses, Captive Shadows: Writing on Film, 2002–2012* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2013), 263–270.

33 Ibid, 263.

34 Ibid, 264.

35 Ibid, 269.

36 Ibid, 270.

37 Roberto Bolaño, *The Savage Detectives*, trans. Natasha Wimmer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 529.

Library Underground

• a
• reading
• list
• for
• a
• coming
• community

● In capitalism, institutionalized libraries, publishers, and book traders all have ways to suppress the publishing of, the access to, or the distribution of texts and books—rigidities inviting creative subversion.

Eva Weinmayr

I

Ed Ruscha's Letter • An Alternative Information Service • There is No Such Thing as Neutral Knowledge

INNER VOICE: Why start with Ed Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*?

EVA WEINMAYR: Simply, because he is *the* pioneer of artists' books and because he gives interesting insights on the topic in a letter we have in The Piracy Collection in London.[1] In it, he writes that it was "a terrible mistake" to number the first edition of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*. He saw, that numbering the individual copies creates a "limited edition" rather than "just another book." He wanted his books to circulate freely. So it seemed quite counterproductive to turn the book into a collectible. Numbering creates a scarcity that hikes up the value. He actually was right: a copy of the first (numbered) edition of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* sells today on AbeBooks for 17,432 £ [fig. 1]. It has become an object of desire for private collectors and big art institutions likewise.

INNER VOICE: Remind me, what was Ruscha's initial print run?

EVA WEINMAYR: He numbered and signed the first run of 400 in 1963. This had been followed up by a second edition of 500 in 1967. In 1969, he printed a third edition of 3,000. A huge print run for an artist-booklet. In my view it can be seen as the attempt to flood the market in order to undermine the trading of the books as expensive collectibles.

INNER VOICE: But what's wrong with that? Why can't books primarily be a collector's spoil and reading matter only as a secondary function?

EVA WEINMAYR: Books need to circulate to have an impact by being read. That is why books came about in the first place. Owning a book is fine but it still needs to be accessible. It's quite interesting that, roughly at the same time in the 1960s, a few hundred miles north of Los Angeles another publishing project took off. Stewart Brand, Lois Jennings, and a group of friends kicked around ideas to finally set up a serial publication in 1968: the *Whole Earth Catalog*—an alternative information service and distribution system [fig. 2].

INNER VOICE: I guess it was more about providing information to friends, who like themselves, attempted to live in communes. It was more a newsletter than a real book.

EVA WEINMAYR: The decisive point is that its publication gave it freedom to circulate. It was published twice a year—with more frequent updates in the form of supplements. The *Whole Earth Catalog* collated reviews of self-published counterculture literature, manuals, information about new tools, building and land use designs, as well as general philosophical texts. It provided practical "News to Use" for everybody in the community and source ideas for potential community building. Imagine the perversity, had such a rich tool been put into the cupboard of a solvent collector. David Senior, bibliographer at the MoMA Library, wrote a fantastic text about it in *Fragments from Access to Tools: Publications from the Whole Earth Catalog 1968–1974* [fig. 3].

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[1] Letter to writer and co-founder of *Village Voice* John Wilcock, February 25, 1966.

> **INNER VOICE:** If I am correctly informed, it also listed and reviewed a wide range of products such as books, manuals, tools, machines, but did not sell any of the products directly. Instead, the vendor's contact information was listed alongside the item and its review. In that it was decidedly anti-commercial.

EVA WEINMAYR: No doubt. And in a way it resembled an alternative library project—a kind of "reading list for a coming community,"[2] as Senior put it. And as such the *Whole Earth Catalog* was not just informing about tools, it was a tool in itself, a publishing concept and a community-in-print. It was also a kind of educational service. Before they started the magazine, Stewart and his wife Lois embarked on a commune road trip with a truck touring the country and doing educational fairs. The *Whole Earth Truck Store* was not only "a store, but also an alternative lending library and a mobile micro-education fair."[3]

> **INNER VOICE:** Interestingly, David Senior describes the catalog project as a precursor of today's online communities as the publication talked directly to its readership, asked its readers questions and completed the feedback loop by publishing reader letters, reviews and announcements.

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, and that's why the catalog became very popular and kept growing. In the years 1968 to 1975, more than 2.5 million copies were sold. It was a living organism, alive and kicking, rather than something dead put on a plinth for worship. They were widely distributed through informal channels like mail order, alternative bookshops, and in community libraries.

> **INNER VOICE:** Libraries were an important reference point at the time, as it seems.

EVA WEINMAYR: Indeed, one of the many ads in the *Whole Earth Catalog* announced the 158-page library press publication *Revolting Librarians* [fig. 4] which campaigned for the inclusion of neglected topics in their library information service. Materials produced by independent and small-scale publishers had up to then not been reviewed in the library press, therefore not acquired for the libraries. Subsequently, they were not accessible for the readers, who had to do with the fairly limited range of publications by commercial publishing houses. Those, of course, would pick up alternative topics only when profit could be sensed.

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[2] David Senior, ed., *Fragments from Access to Tools: Publications from the Whole Earth Catalog 1968–1974* (Portland, Oregon: Publication Studio, 2013), 2–3.

[3] Andrew Kirk, *Counterculture Green*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 48.

QUESTION: Do you know Celeste West?

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, she is brilliant! She actually co-edited the *Revolting Librarians* book. She was a feminist librarian and, in 1967, the founding editor of *Synergy Magazine*, an alternative library newsletter. She campaigned for librarians to become pivotal to enforce the Library Bill of Rights issued by the American Library Association in the 1930s (see Appendix).

INNER VOICE: Free and neutral provision and access to knowledge for everybody is the famous creed of that bill.

EVA WEINMAYR: Neutral? I don't think there is such a thing as neutrality when it comes to knowledge! Librarian activists such as *Synergy Magazine* demanded to address and recognize the political context of the work of librarians.

They looked at the nature of library catalogs, indexes, and search tools because they believed that "these tools were mostly 'rear-view mirrors' that provided little or no bibliographic access to the actual information needs." From April 1968 on, a feature section was included in an attempt "to concentrate on subjects of current interest or on popular subjects for which we feel there is a lack of available information."[4] These were subjects such as Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, Dope, Native Americans, Ecology, Changing the Family Structure, Independent Publishing, and the Underground Press.[5]

INNER VOICE: (Holding up a back cover of *Synergy Magazine*) This list of subjects here gives an instructive overview of topics important to them [fig. 5].

EVA WEINMAYR: New cataloging and new subjects were just one thing. Celeste West's aim was also to fundamentally shift the concept of the library from "conserving and organizing information to generating or promoting" it.[6] She initiated an alternative library culture that was less preoccupied with archiving of cultural records then more with activating them.

INNER VOICE: It sounds as if you also came across Anna-Sophie Springer's book *Fantasies of the Library*?

EVA WEINMAYR: Andrea Francke just sent me a copy [fig. 6]. It basically builds on Celeste West. The book looks at libraries from a curatorial perspective. It says that the library's primary function privileges active use over passive display and presentation, whereas museums and archives normally store objects and information only after the time of their utility has expired. So the library is really about being switched on by its readers. And that is a good thing.

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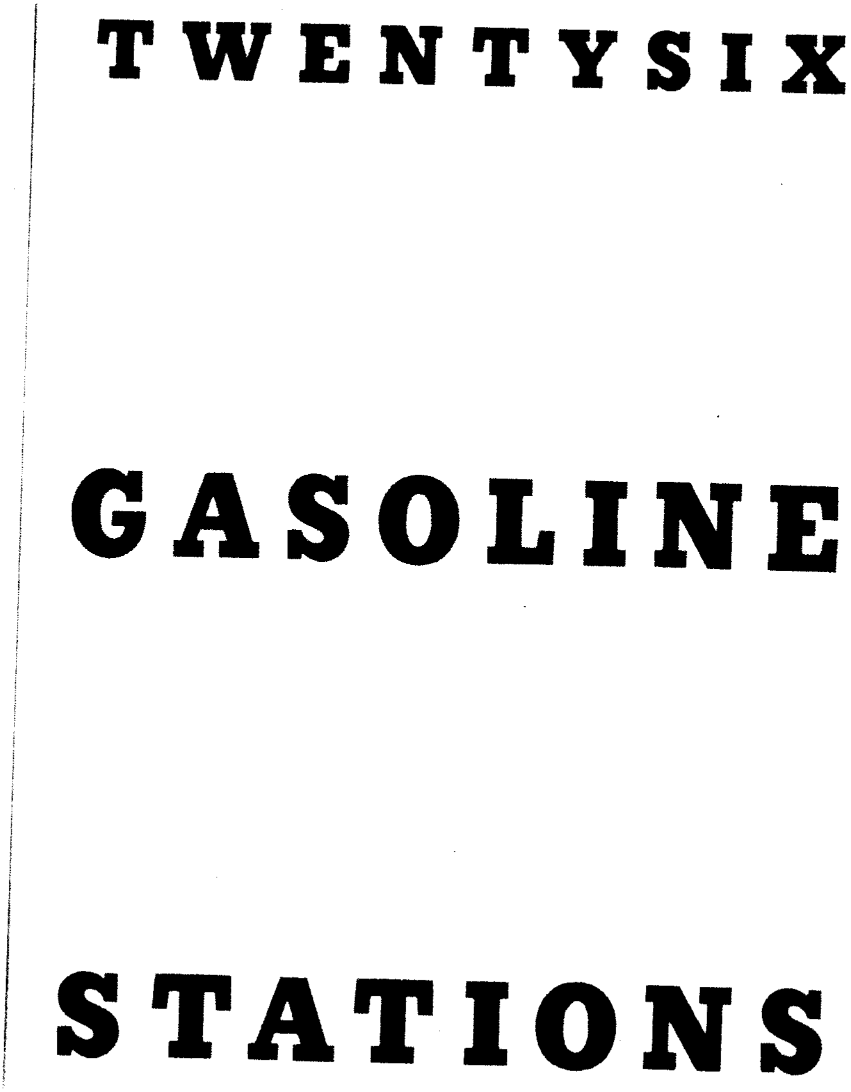
[4] "Index for 1967–71," *Synergy Magazine* (San Francisco: Bay Area Reference Center, 1972).

[5] See Tony Samek, "Intellectual Freedom within the Profession: A Look Back at Freedom of Expression and the Alternative Library Press," *Library Juice* 6:6 (2003), http://libr.org/juice/issues/vol6/LJ_6.6.html.

[6] Celeste West, "Conversation with Celeste West," interview by Milton Wolf, *Libraries for Social Change: Women's Issue*, 31/32 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 29–35, 29.



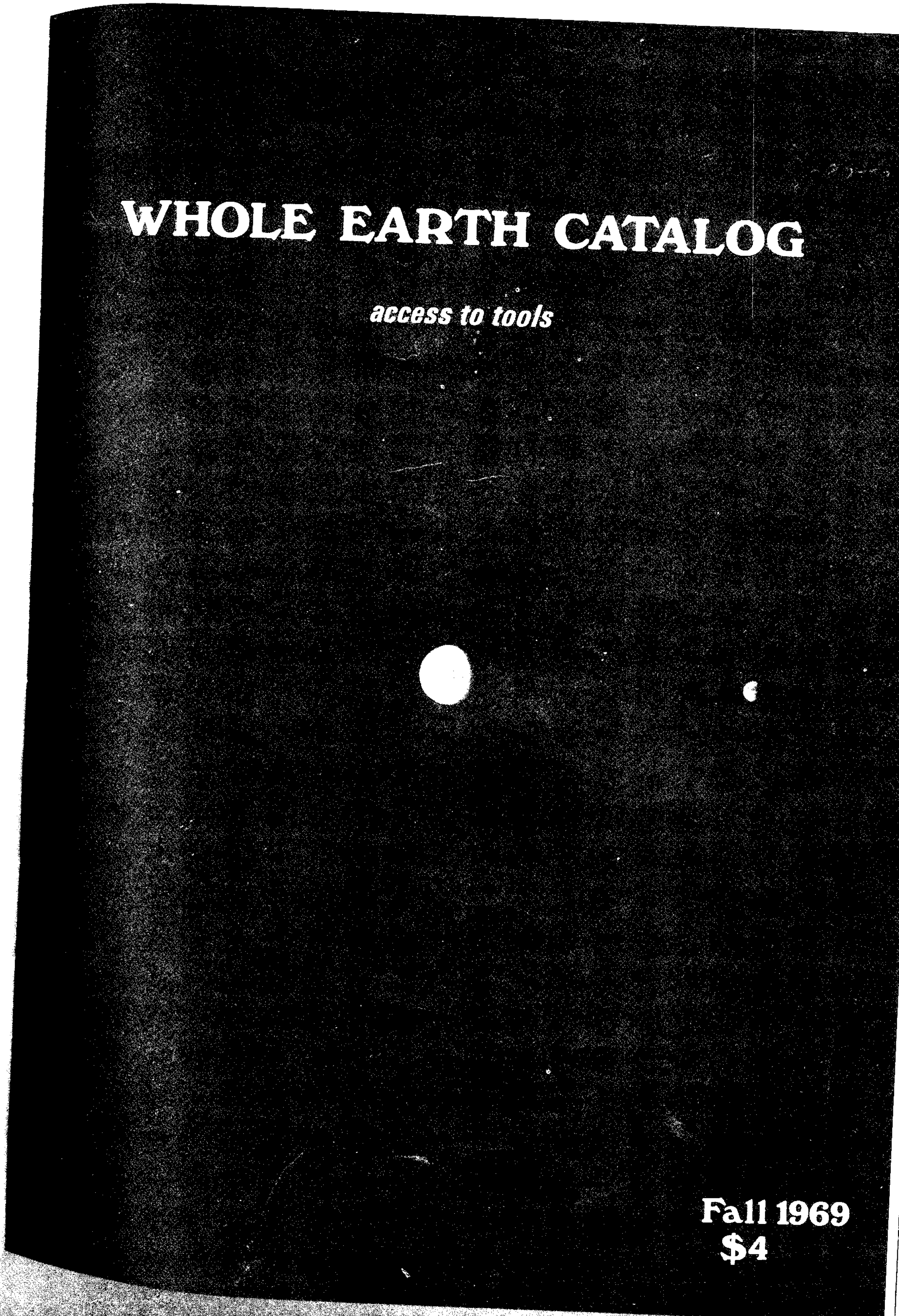
TWENTYSIX

GASOLINE

STATIONS

Fig. 1. Ed Ruscha self-published the first edition of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* in his own imprint National Excelsior Press in 1963. It had a print run of 400 copies, which he numbered. © Ed Ruscha, 2015.

→ Fig. 2. Stewart Brand, *Whole Earth Catalog*, Fall 1969.



WHOLE EARTH CATALOG

access to tools

Fall 1969
$4

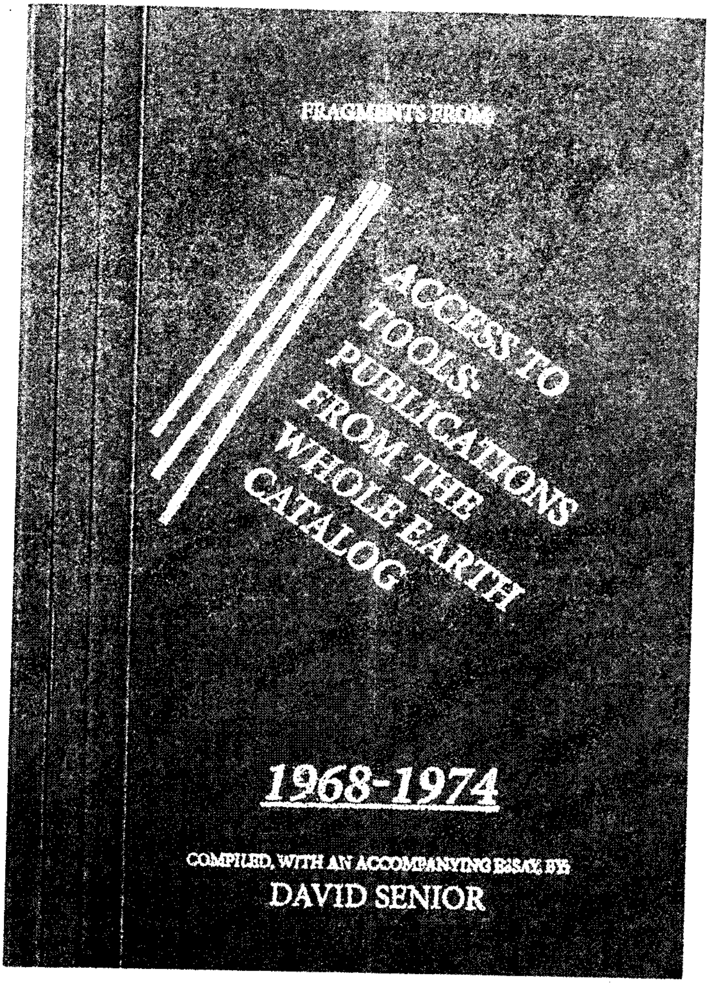

FRAGMENTS FROM
ACCESS TO TOOLS: PUBLICATIONS FROM THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG
1968-1974
COMPILED, WITH AN ACCOMPANYING ESSAY, BY:
DAVID SENIOR

Fig. 3. David Senior (ed.), *Fragments from Access to Tools: Publications from the Whole Earth Catalog 1968–1974*, Portland, Oregon: Publication Studio, 2013 (first edition Wooden Leg Press, 2012).

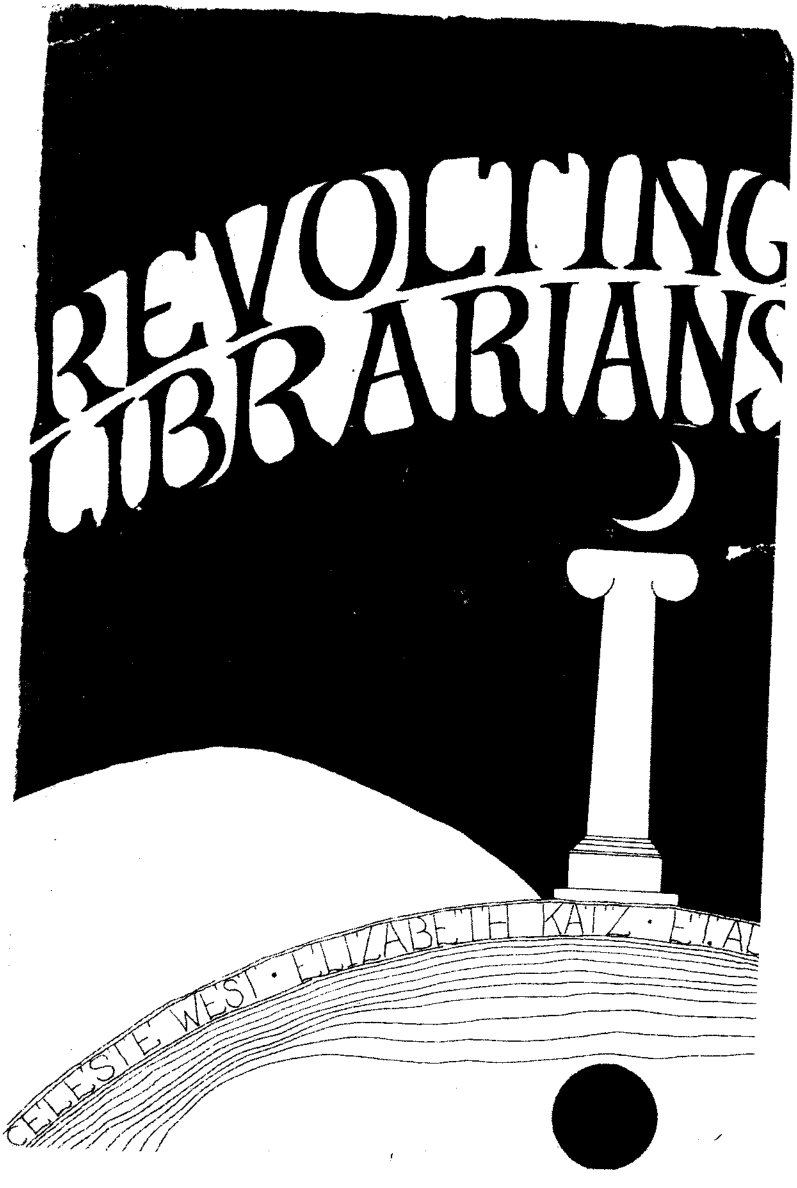
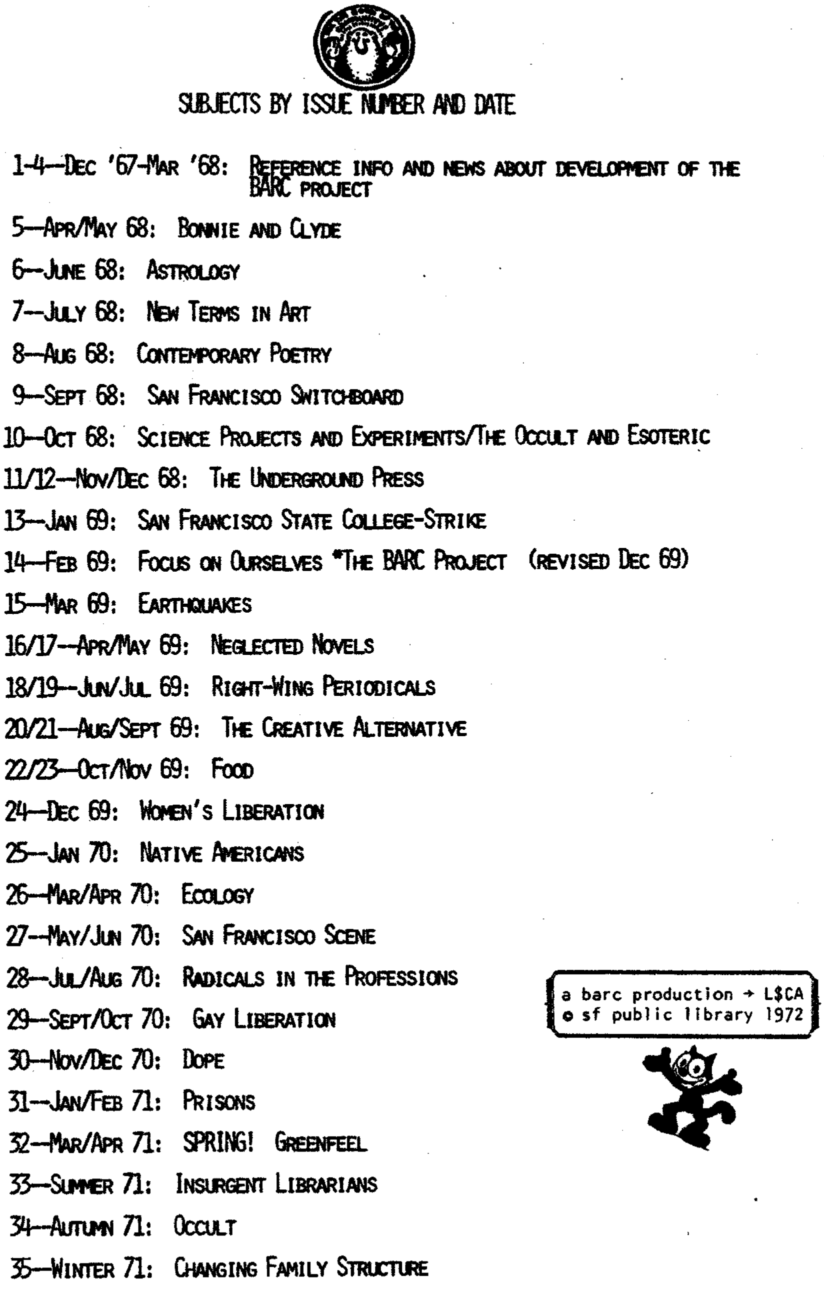

REVOLTING
LIBRARIANS
CELESTE WEST • ELIZABETH KATZ • ELIZ

Fig. 4. Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz (eds.), *Revolting Librarians*, San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1972, front cover. The price was $2.00 and the book was distributed by the American Library Association, Chicago by prepaid post. Photo: Sarah Mae, CC-BY-NC, https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0.



SUBJECTS BY ISSUE NUMBER AND DATE

1-4--Dec '67-Mar '68: Reference info and news about development of the BARC project

5--Apr/May 68: Bonnie and Clyde

6--June 68: Astrology

7--July 68: New Terms in Art

8--Aug 68: Contemporary Poetry

9--Sept 68: San Francisco Switchboard

10--Oct 68: Science Projects and Experiments/The Occult and Esoteric

11/12--Nov/Dec 68: The Underground Press

13--Jan 69: San Francisco State College-Strike

14--Feb 69: Focus on Ourselves *The BARC Project (revised Dec 69)

15--Mar 69: Earthquakes

16/17--Apr/May 69: Neglected Novels

18/19--Jun/Jul 69: Right-Wing Periodicals

20/21--Aug/Sept 69: The Creative Alternative

22/23--Oct/Nov 69: Food

24--Dec 69: Women's Liberation

25--Jan 70: Native Americans

26--Mar/Apr 70: Ecology

27--May/Jun 70: San Francisco Scene

28--Jul/Aug 70: Radicals in the Professions

29--Sept/Oct 70: Gay Liberation

30--Nov/Dec 70: Dope

31--Jan/Feb 71: Prisons

32--Mar/Apr 71: SPRING! Greenfeel

33--Summer 71: Insurgent Librarians

34--Autumn 71: Occult

35--Winter 71: Changing Family Structure

a barc production → L$CA
o sf public library 1972

Fig. 5. *Synergy Magazine*, San Francisco: Bay Area Reference Center, 1972, Index for 1967–71, back cover. Source: https://celestewest.wordpress.com/synergy-magazine.

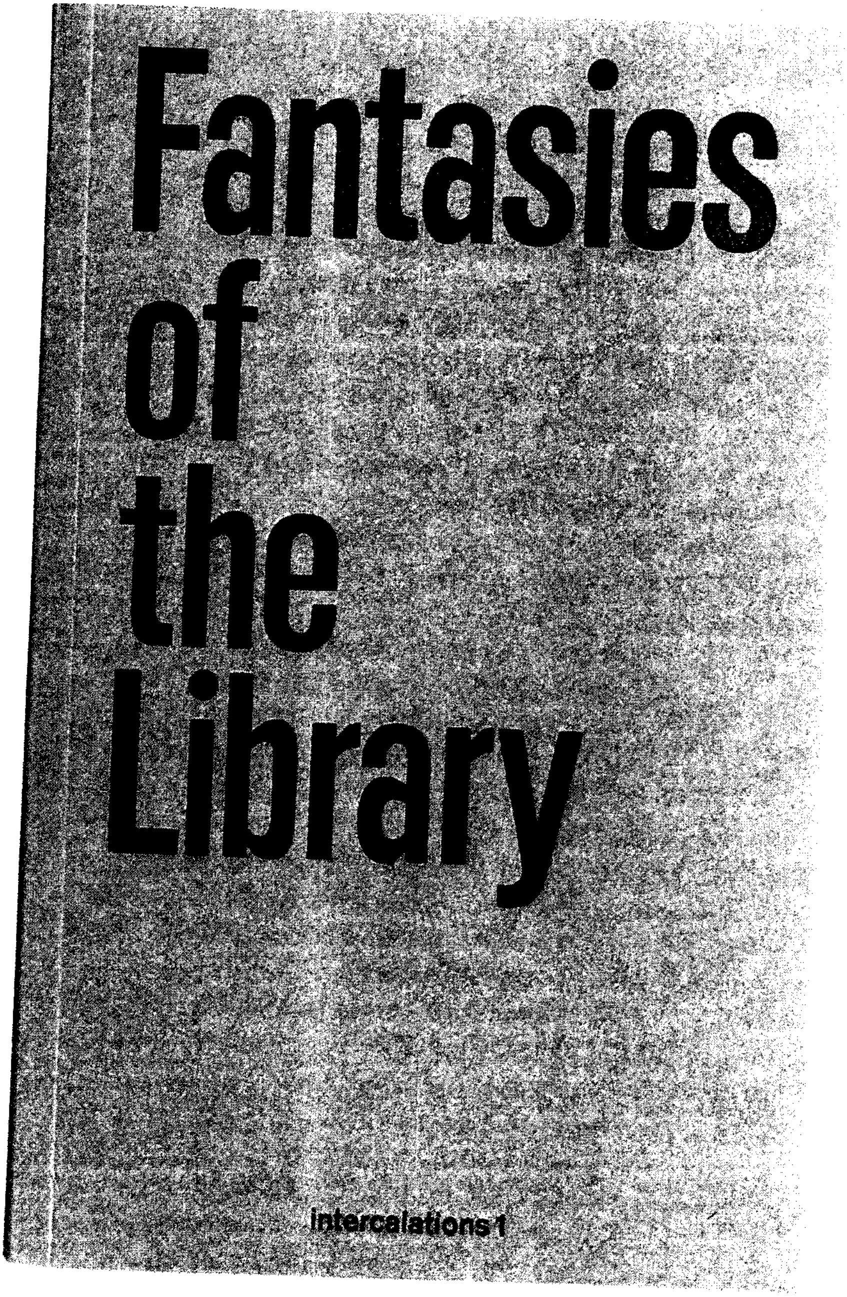

Fantasies of the Library
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Fig. 6. Anna-Sophie Springer & Etienne Turpin (eds.), *Fantasies of the Library*, Berlin: K. Verlag & Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2015. Photo: Anna-Sophie Springer.

II

Infinite Hospitality • The Library is a Growing Organism • Melvil Dewey as One-Man Silicon Valley

EVA WEINMAYR: The library essentially is also a structure that is animated by the use of its reader. And therefore it's important to make it easy to retrieve information. David Senior writes in his essay *Infinite Hospitality* [fig. 7] about the Indian mathematician and librarian S.R. Ranganathan and his *Five Laws of Library Science* (1931). "The library is a growing organism" is one of these laws. Ranganathan developed an unorthodox classification system using "facets" where several topics can be linked in a series of keywords in order to describe the various subjects present in a single book.[7]

INNER VOICE: This system creates relationships between the concepts instead of a hierarchical delineation as it is used traditionally by libraries and developed by Melvil Dewey.[8]

EVA WEINMAYR: Melvil Dewey's model is still the standard organizing system in many public libraries. But it is not without criticism: his biographer Wayne A. Wiegand interestingly argues that Dewey's narrow interpretation of objectivity is fully based on "a patriarchal White Western (and, of course, Christian)"[9] worldview. What is left out here is a whole range of alternative perspectives on humanity's knowledge.

INNER VOICE: Are you aware that writer Shannon Mattern has described Melvil Dewey "as a one-man Silicon Valley, born a century before Steve Jobs"?[10] Because in 1876, just after graduating from College, he copyrighted his library classification scheme.

EVA WEINMAYR: More than that! He simultaneously even started a hugely successful furniture business providing the "right" chairs, tables, and shelves to libraries. Even in that respect he imposed his control on how libraries had to function according to him.

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[7] S. R. Ranganathan outlines the Five Laws of Library Science. "1. Books are for use. 2. Every reader his [or her] book. 3. Every book its reader. 4. Save the time of the user. 5. The library is a growing organism." "Infinite Hospitality," in *Every Day the Urge Grows Stronger to Get Hold of an Object at Very Close Range by Way of Its Likeness*, ed. David Senior (New York: Dexter Sinister, 2008). This unbound collection of 14 folders has been reprinted in *Portable Document Format* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009) and can be found online at www.dextersinister.org. French writer Georges Perec also came up with a set of unusual categories to organize his personal library—"alphabetically, by continent or country, by colour, by date of acquisition, by date of publication, by format, by genre, by major periods of literary history, by language, by priority for future reading, by binding or by series." Georges Perec, "Brief Notes on the Art and Manner of Arranging One's Books," in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, ed. John Sturrock (London: Penguin, 1999), 148–155.

[8] The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system, based on numbers attributed to nine main categories, was invented in the 1870s. It is extendable, as its numerical sequences can be split up infinitely and new categories added.

[9] Wayne A. Wiegand, "The 'Amherst Method': The Origins of the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme," *Libraries & Culture* 33, no. 2 (spring 1998), 175–194, 183. Wayne A. Wiegand examines meticulously how the conservative mindset at Amherst College, where Dewey was a student and library assistant, shaped Dewey's concepts of classifications and their hierarchies. "Its moral center was located in 'Anglo-Saxonism' a doctrine that defined 'objectivity' and touted the unique virtues, mission, and destiny of the Anglo-Saxon 'race.'" Ibid. It is quite important to understand, that with the very headings, he came up with, Dewey framed and cemented "a worldview and knowledge structure taught on the tiny Amherst College campus between 1870 and 1875 into what became the world's most widely used library classification." Ibid., 188.

INNER VOICE: Megan Shaw Prelinger from the Prelinger Library in San Francisco talks about the shortcomings of Dewey's system: "First," she says, "[our] collection is unique to our combined areas of particular interest. It has never tried to be a general-interest research collection. Second, therefore, the library did not really fit the taxonomic systems of either the Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal. For instance: Art and politics? Handmade films? Nature-culture interface? The history of the demonization of the youth in society? These are just a few of our subject areas that are not clearly articulated in pre-existing taxonomic systems."[11]

INNER VOICE: Do you know of any examples where people have organized publicly accessible libraries in an alternative way?

EVA WEINMAYR: The Ethical Culture School in New York City for example carried out a radical experiment. They wanted for their students a more independent and empowered seeking practice in their library. Therefore they ditched the Dewey system and developed the Metis system instead, named after the mother of Athena in Greek mythology. They responded to the problem that students frequently were more focused on actually seeking materials rather than using them and along with the kids developed a more usable classification system.[12]

INNER VOICE: For example?

EVA WEINMAYR: They discovered, that kids were interested in topics rather than in authors. Some sections were under-used such as "Languages" which were turned into "Community," "Craft" is now labeled "Making Stuff." But the most radical step was to mix the classic categories of "fiction" and "non-fiction."

INNER VOICE: Really? That sounds pretty radical.

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, they found out, that this move triggers thoughts and discussions, where students have to evaluate on their own what is imagination and what is information and discover the blurred lines in between.

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[10] Shannon Mattern describes Dewey as "the quintessential Industrial Age entrepreneur. [...] He helped found the American Library Association, served as founding editor of Library Journal, and launched the American Metric Bureau, which campaigned for adoption of the metric system. He was 24 years old. He had already established the Library Bureau, a company that sold (and helped standardize) library supplies, furniture, media display and storage devices, and equipment for managing the circulation of collection materials. As chief librarian at Columbia College, Dewey established the first library school—called, notably, the School of Library Economy." Shannon Mattern, "Library as Infrastructure," *Places Magazine*, June 2014, https://placesjournal.org/article/library-as-infrastructure/.

[11] "Erin Kissane in conversation with Megan Shaw and Erik Prelinger," *Fantasies of the Library*, ed. Anna-Sophie Springer and Etienne Turpin (Berlin: K Verlag & Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2015), 2–18, 4.

[12] Tali Balas et al., "Are Dewey's Days Numbered? Libraries Nationwide Are Ditching the Old Classification System," *School Library Journal*, September 28, 2012, http://www.slj.com/2012/09/collection-development/are-deweys-days-numbered-libraries-across-the-country-are-giving-the-old-classification-system-the-heave-ho-heres-one-schools-story/#.

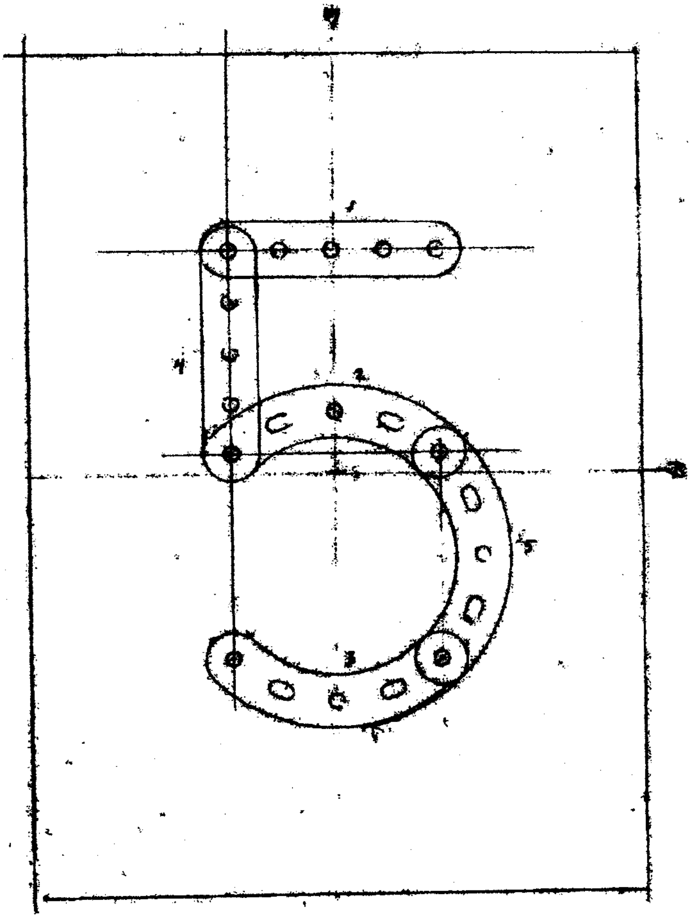

Fig. 7. David Senior, "Infinite Hospitality," in *Every Day the Urge Grows Stronger to Get Hold of an Object at Very Close Range by Way of Its Likeness*, published by Dexter Sinister as an unbound collection of 14 folders, New York: The Art Libraries Society and Museum of Modern Art, 2008, folder front cover.

III

A Library is a Space Where Marketable Goods Are Turned into Public Goods

EVA WEINMAYR: Libraries provide immaterial goods and media that would otherwise have to be purchased. When we try to reduce the book and its knowledge to an object-commodity, we forget that a book is actually brought to life by its readers and not by its sales figures. It's the reader's engagement with the book that generates creative and critical thinking, which feeds back into a public domain.

INNER VOICE: Sales figures? Commodity? You are not talking about Amm...

EVA WEINMAYR: Amazon, exactly: "Books are easy to ship and hard to break." That was Amazon's initial idea. George Packer quoted the company's former deputy in a piece for the *New Yorker* saying: "It wasn't a love of books that led Jeff Bezos to start an online bookstore. It was totally based on the property of books as a product."[13] As I said: Libraries provide immaterial goods and media that would otherwise have to be purchased.

INNER VOICE: Terry Deary, one of the best selling children-book authors, follows up this logic with his remarks about libraries. He recently said in a speech that libraries are not relevant anymore. His argument: it has been 150 years since the Public Libraries Act gave rise to the first free public libraries in the UK, and since then times have changed.

EVA WEINMAYR: It is as scary as it is stupid. He perversely reasons that libraries promote the idea that "we've got an entitlement to read books for free, at the expense of authors, publishers and council tax payers. This is not the Victorian age, when we wanted to allow the impoverished access to literature. We pay for compulsory schooling to do that."[14] You can see that current approaches of greed to books as objects of commercial fetish have come a long way from the generous distribution of culture of the Sixties we were just touching on.

INNER VOICE: Apparently Deary's statement triggered lots of hate mail.

EVA WEINMAYR: His statement is actually just following a general hidden logic of neoliberalism, permeating every single aspect of our lives. The current intellectual property discourse is cynically shaping our relationship with culture. Andrea Francke, my colleague in The Piracy Project,[15] recently wrote a passage in an unpublished paper I want to read back to you: "Deary's conclusion is a perfectly logical one and it was just a matter of time before someone voiced it. That is what makes it so scary. Deary's mindset tries to turn knowledge into property: It's yours, you own it. Like a house, a car or a coat that has been passed down through generations shouldn't you have the right to pass down the rights of your book so your great-great-great grandchildren can live on it. Maybe that's why the use of "commons" as a synonym for public domain has become so popular. By using it we unconsciously confirm the transformation of culture and knowledge into property (even if into a communal one)." And this is very illustrating.

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[13] George Packer, "Cheap Words," *New Yorker*, February 17, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/17/cheap-words.

[14] Alison Flood, "Libraries 'have had their day,' says Horrible Histories author," *Guardian*, February 13, 2013.

IV

Against the Monopoly of the Frankfurt Publisher

INNER VOICE: You also visited Raubdruck Archiv in Germany recently. And there seem to be striking parallels to America in the Sixties?

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, Sarah Käsmayr, a young graphic designer, who did her dissertation on book piracy,[16] took us to Raubdruck Archiv. It's an archive of more than 3,000 pirated books collected by Götz von Olenhusen, a now retired intellectual property lawyer in Germany [fig. 8].[17] And you are right. Around the same years, Ruscha and Brand circulated their self-published books in California, West Germany's student scene grew fed up with the limited access to critical theory, which was a crucial intellectual resource for the growing alternative and political student culture. They saw mainstream publishing ignorant and disinterested in printing, for instance, more radical writings of critical psychoanalysts like Wilhelm Reich or Anna and Sigmund Freud. The same went for some writing in social theory and philosophy where isolated works of the Frankfurt School—from people like Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Lukács, Habermas, or Benjamin—were ignored by the mainstream publishers.

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[15] The Piracy Project is an international publishing and exhibition project exploring the philosophical, legal, and practical implications of book piracy and creative modes of reproduction. Through research and an international call for submissions, The Piracy Project has gathered a current collection of 200 modified, appropriated, and copied books from all over the world. The collection, which is cataloged online, is the starting point for talks and work groups around the concept of originality, the notion of authorship, and politics of copyright. The Piracy Project is run by Andrea Francke and Eva Weinmayr as part of AND Publishing's research program. See www.andpublishing.org.

[16] See Haras K. [Sarah Käsmayr], *Ein Raubdruckbuch, Wandlungen der* Chronik eines angekündigten Todes *von Gabriel García Márquez* (Bremen: University Press Bremen, 2014).

[17] See Götz von Olenhusen and Christa Gnirß, *Handbuch der Raubdrucke. Theorie und Klassenkampf. Sozialisierte Drucke und proletarische Reprints. Eine Bibliographie* (Pullach: Verlag Dokumentation Saur KG, 1973).

INNER VOICE: How did these students go about this?

EVA WEINMAYR: Well, the students based their reading groups and discussions partly on texts which were banned during the 1930s and 40s, got lost or were difficult to access. In some cases republication was even banned by heirs or the author's estates in a conservative climate of post-war Germany. Von Olenhusen told us for instance, that the estate of Wilhelm Reich ...

INNER VOICE: ... the author of *The Mass Psychology of Fascism, The Function of the Orgasm* and the *Discovery of Orgone* ... ?

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, he had already passed away at the time and his estate did not give permission to publish his most controversial writings, because his family wanted to secure a more moderate legacy.

INNER VOICE: And that was fair reason for Reich's German fans to pirate, publish and circulate these texts?

EVA WEINMAYR: Certainly. They used for example the term "sozialisierter Druck" for their pirate-prints, which means these prints are meant to get "socialized" for the use of the public working against the privatizing power of individuals (authors, publishers, heirs) and monopolies owning the copyright.[18] Often, the copy in the library was good enough to serve as a source for a pirate-print. They transcribed excerpts on the typewriter, duplicated them and circulated the texts on the streets, in the university or in the newly created left-leaning bookshops starting to pop up across German cities. It was a thriving scene and quickly an informal network of makeshift publishers and DIY-printers had developed.

INNER VOICE: Was that also a business model? Did they make money from it?

EVA WEINMAYR: Well, I'd call it rather a labor of love. Imagine all the effort invested in typing, printing on a mimeograph, binding and distributing the texts, which were then sold very cheaply. In our interview von Olenhusen, who runs Raubdruck Archiv, said that later pirates employed financially more successful models and generated a small income for themselves. Some of Germany's left-leaning small publishing houses, such as Merve or März Verlag took their origin from this unruly ecosystem of DIY-publishers. But the motivation to bring buried texts back into circulation were in these early years clearly driven by a mission to contribute to society rather than making commercial gain.

INNER VOICE: And it was not only theorists they pirated for good?

EVA WEINMAYR: Sarah Käsmayr collated stunning research on the many unofficial translations and pirate editions of García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* [fig. 9]. Tom Koenigs, who is today MP for the German Green party, felt the copy price for the forthcoming official translation by publisher Kiepenheuer & Witsch was too costly. And, he did not want to wait for the publisher's translation of the novel—so he did the job himself. His colleagues at the Karl Marx bookshop in Frankfurt supported him by working his shifts in the bookshop and after a few weeks the home-translated novel was published in Frankfurt's city magazine *Pflasterstrand*[19] [fig. 10]—a few months before the official translation came out. In order to avoid obvious copyright infringement Koenigs attributed authorship to "C. de Arataca," the name of the village in Colombia where García Márquez was born.[20]

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[18] This motivation is also apparent in the visionary names, some pirate-publishers gave themselves, such as "Basisdruck" [grassroots-print] or "Zerschlagt das bürgerliche Copyright" [Smash the bourgeois copyright].

INNER VOICE: So the reader wasn't aware of the real author?

EVA WEINMAYR: Only a few days later, Koenigs—under the synonym of his young daughter's name—revealed in an article in the German cooperative newspaper *taz* that the author is in reality Gabriel García Márquez. Koenigs added a tongue-in-cheek disclaimer: "published by mistake." So the German readership could read the novel for two Deutschmarks (DM) compared to 19.80 DM.[21]

INNER VOICE: And they got away with it?

EVA WEINMAYR: According to Sarah, yes. But beside affordability and open or hidden censorship, topicality was also an issue. For example, the DIY-publishers among the Frankfurt students explain their goals in the foreword of their reprint of Wilhelm Reich's *The Sexual Struggle of Youth* (1932) [fig. 11]. I'll read to you what they say there: "We published this abbreviated text by Wilhelm Reich because until today unfortunately there is still no affordable book for the youth, which explains in simple terms the relationship between sexuality and power [...] we hope to replace this 40-year-old 'sex struggle' with a new one. The income of this pamphlet will go into the production of the new book, a collation of excerpts, a reader, in which we want to include images in order to make the reading more fun and sensual. We'll check out youth magazines, which are around to look for useful material. If you want to help us with this, please get in touch [...]. Osnabrück, December, 1971."

INNER VOICE: What are these other pamphlets here on the table?

EVA WEINMAYR: It's Walter Benjamin's *A Communist Pedagogy. Toys and Play. Program for a Proletarian Children's Theatre. Building Site* [fig. 12]. It has a great foreword, written by his pirates, which explains that the goal was to read this text in a contemporary context, in a discourse and to make these texts work beyond a "philologically clean, dignified capitalistic literary market." They opposed publisher Suhrkamp's monopoly to come up with a "solemn, but useless edition of Benjamin's collected works, banned behind golden spines." They instead want to unleash the politicized Benjamin, taking sides, from a strictly edited and bourgeois environment.

INNER VOICE: The aesthetics of the pamphlets as well as their motivations seem to have a lot in common with samizdat publishing in East Germany and Soviet Russia where censored literature was illegally retyped on a typewriter, duplicated and secretly circulated from hand to hand.

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[19] *Pflasterstrand*, Frankfurt, June 19, 1981. *Pflasterstrand* [cobbles beach] developed from the student union's magazine as a voice for the left revolutionary scene and had in 1980 a print run of 8,500. The name refers to one of the slogans of 1968 civil unrest in Paris: "Sous les pavés, la plage!" [Under the cobbles, the beach!].

[20] See Haras K. [Sarah Käsmayr], *Ein Raubdruckbuch*.

[21] Ibid.

EVA WEINMAYR: It is a striking parallel, isn't it? And it's the achievement of these activist publishers, that texts, which had fallen between the cracks of capitalism or other proprietary motivations (in the West) or open censorship (in the East) were rediscovered, circulated, and therefore archived. It's quite ironic, that sometimes the book pirates were also seen as a kind of market researchers for the big publishing houses. Once a certain text proved to be popular in the underground networks—it might become a bestseller overground. The Cologne-based publisher Alfred Neven DuMont told Götz von Olenhusen: when the first illegal print appeared on his table, he knew it was time to publish Wilhelm Reich. And subsequently he managed to persuade the Reich estate to give permission. Reich's later controversial works, self-published since the 1920s, hence had to wait for mainstream publication until after his death.[22]

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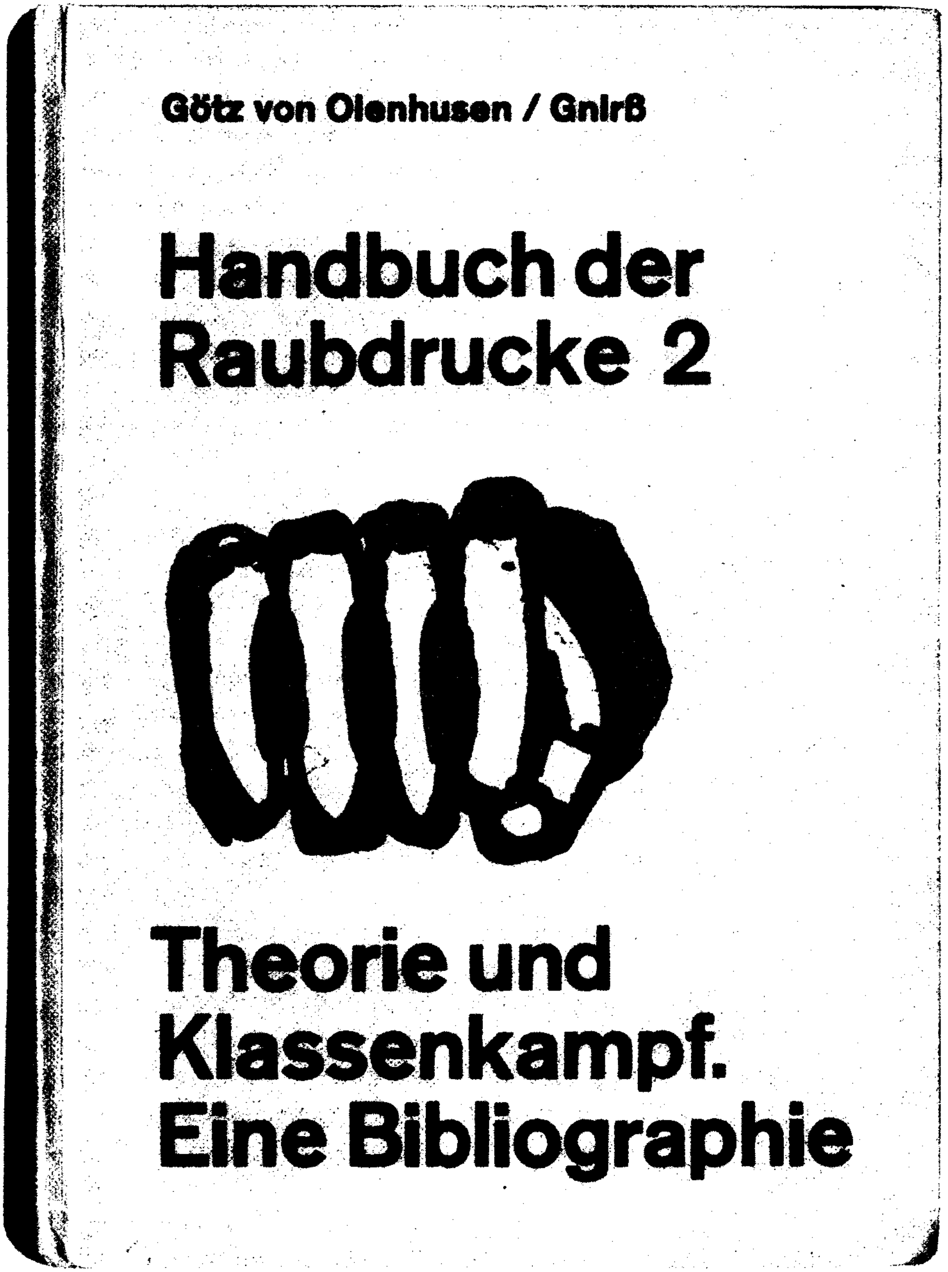
[22] Singular texts were published in the late 1970s by Kiepenheuer & Witsch. His collected late writings were only published in 1995–1997 by Zweitausendeins, Frankfurt.



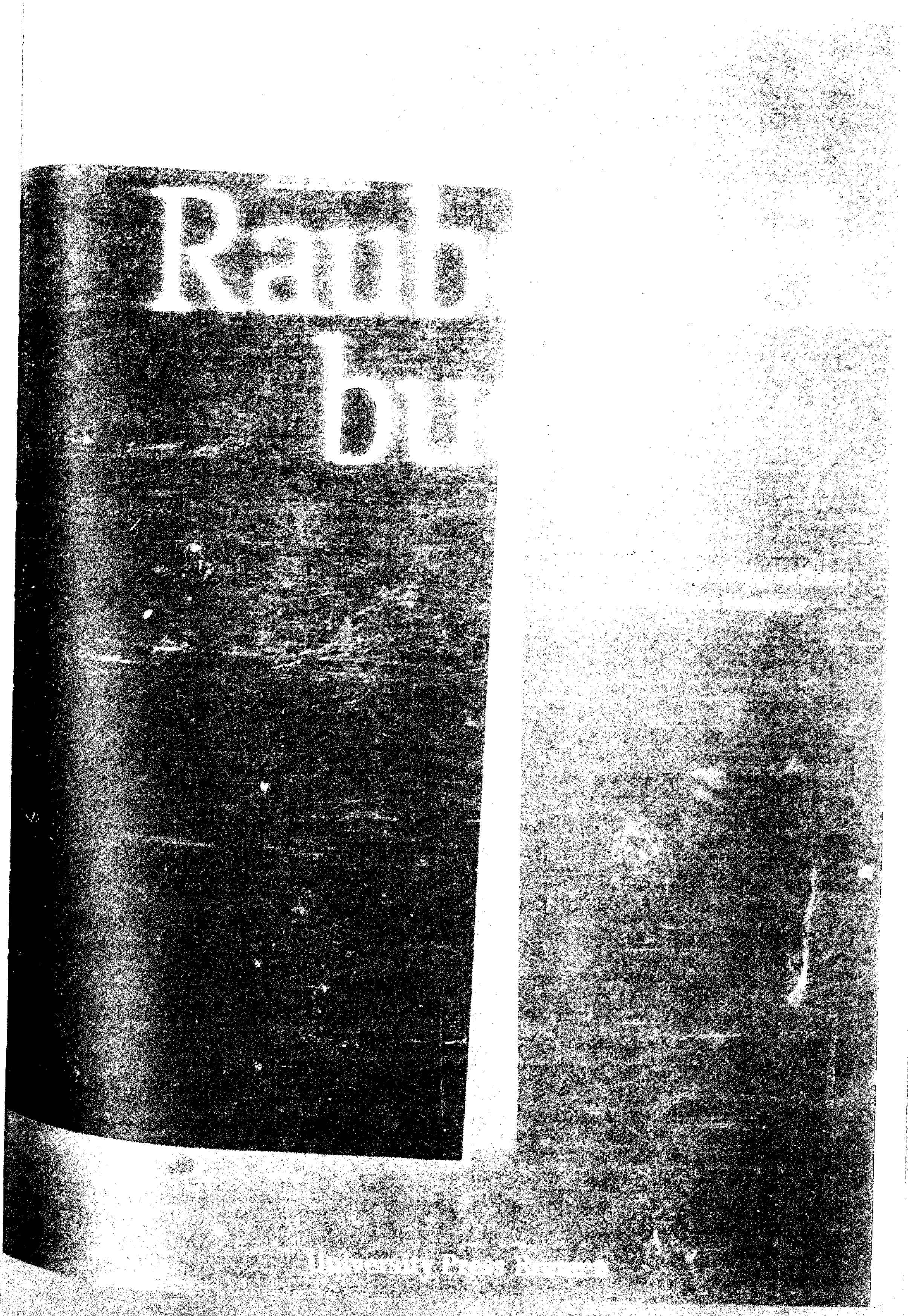
Götz von Olenhusen / Gnirß

Handbuch der Raubdrucke 2

Theorie und Klassenkampf. Eine Bibliographie

Fig. 8. Götz von Olenhusen and Christa Gnirß, *Handbuch der Raubdrucke. Theorie und Klassenkampf. Sozialisierte Drucke und proletarische Reprints. Eine Bibliographie*, Pullach: Verlag Dokumentation Saur KG, 1973.

→ **Fig. 9.** Haras K. [Sarah Käsmayr], *Ein Raubdruckbuch. Wandlungen der* Chronik eines angekündigten Todes *von Gabriel García Márquez*, Bremen: University Press Bremen, 2014.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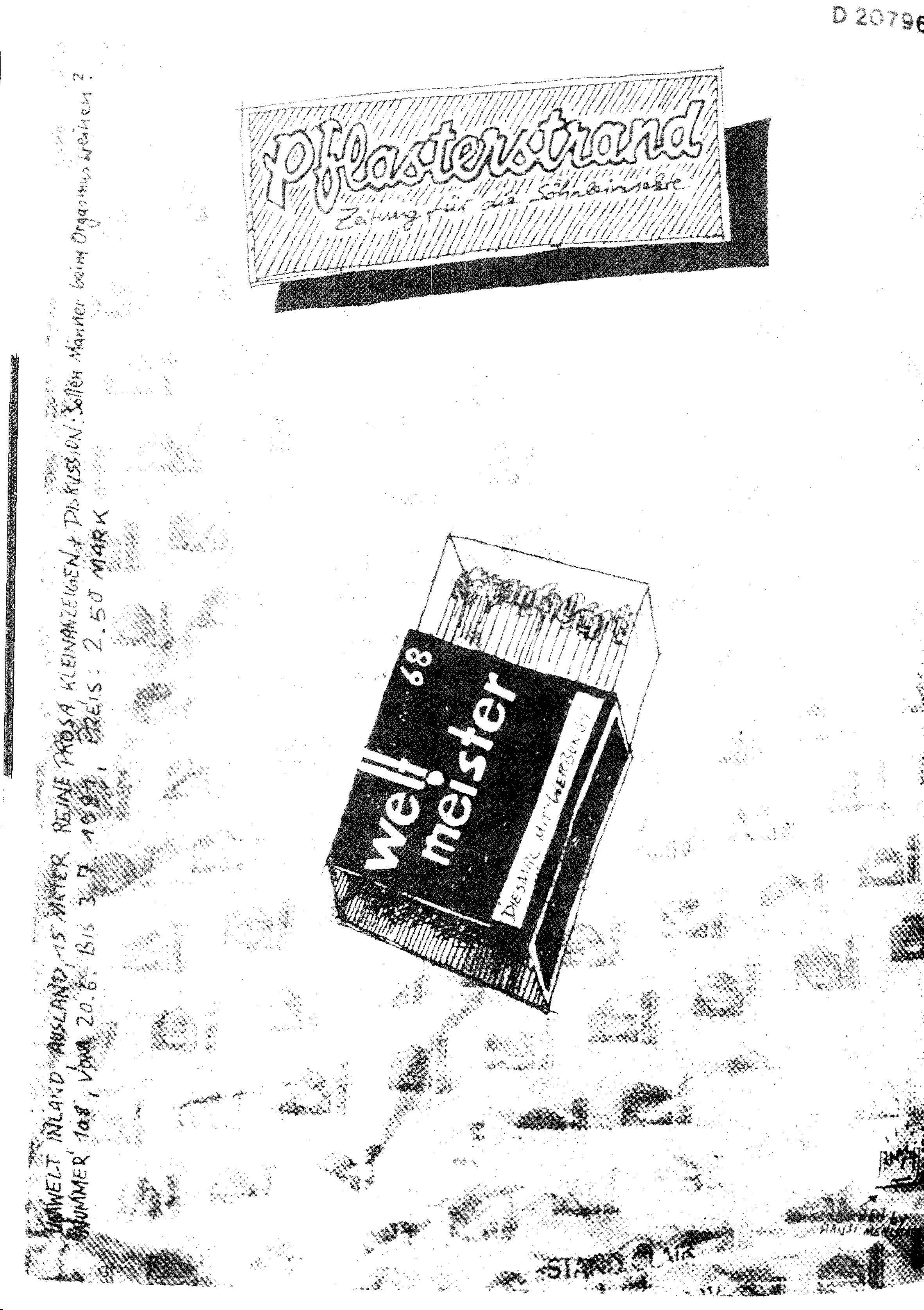
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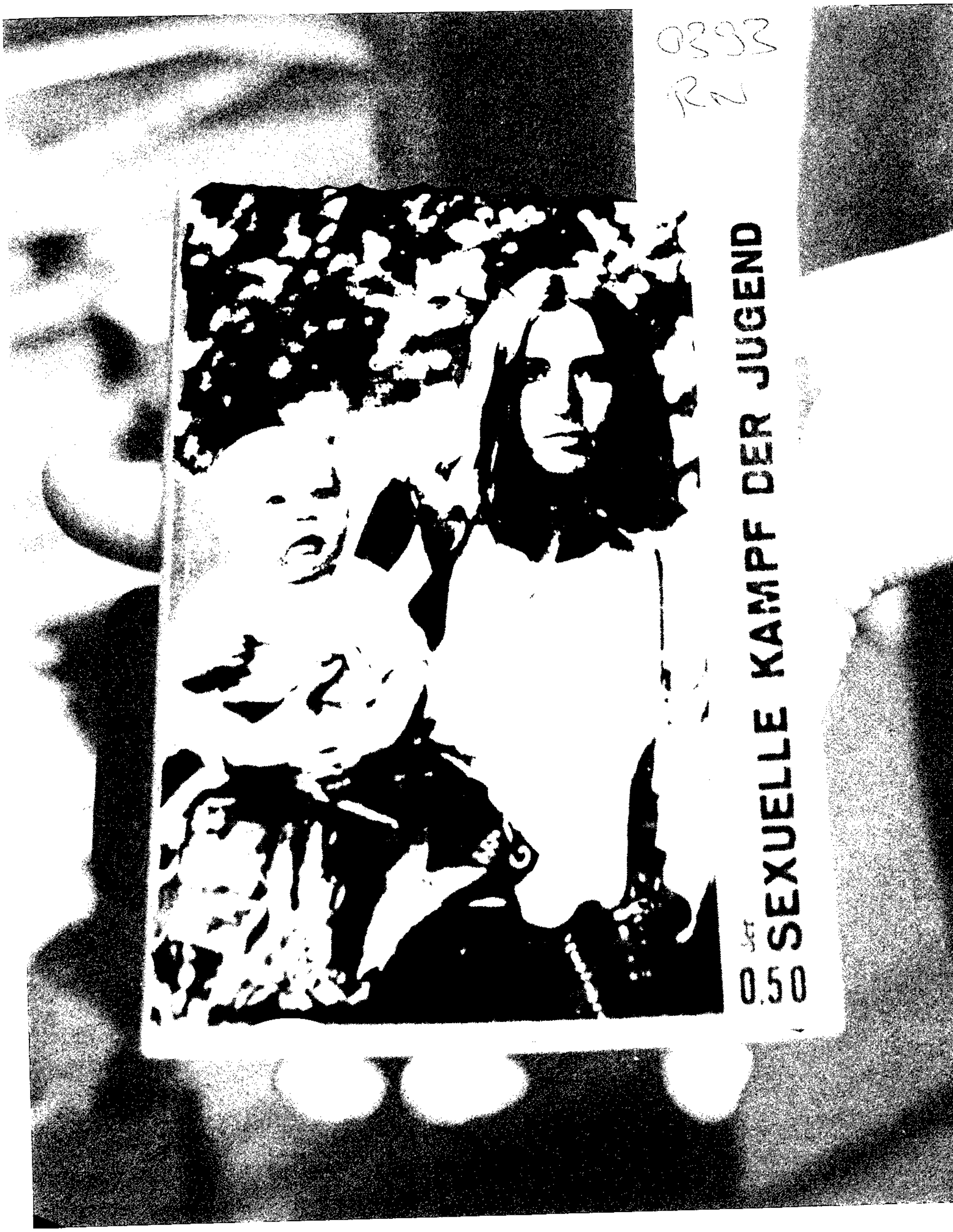
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← **Fig. 10.** *Pflasterstrand*, 1981, front cover as shown in: Haras K. [Sarah Käsmayr], *Ein Raubdruckbuch*, ibid.
Fig. 11. Wilhelm Reich, *Der sexuelle Kampf der Jugend*, pirate edition, around 1970 (Raubdruck Archiv). Photo: Andrea Francke.

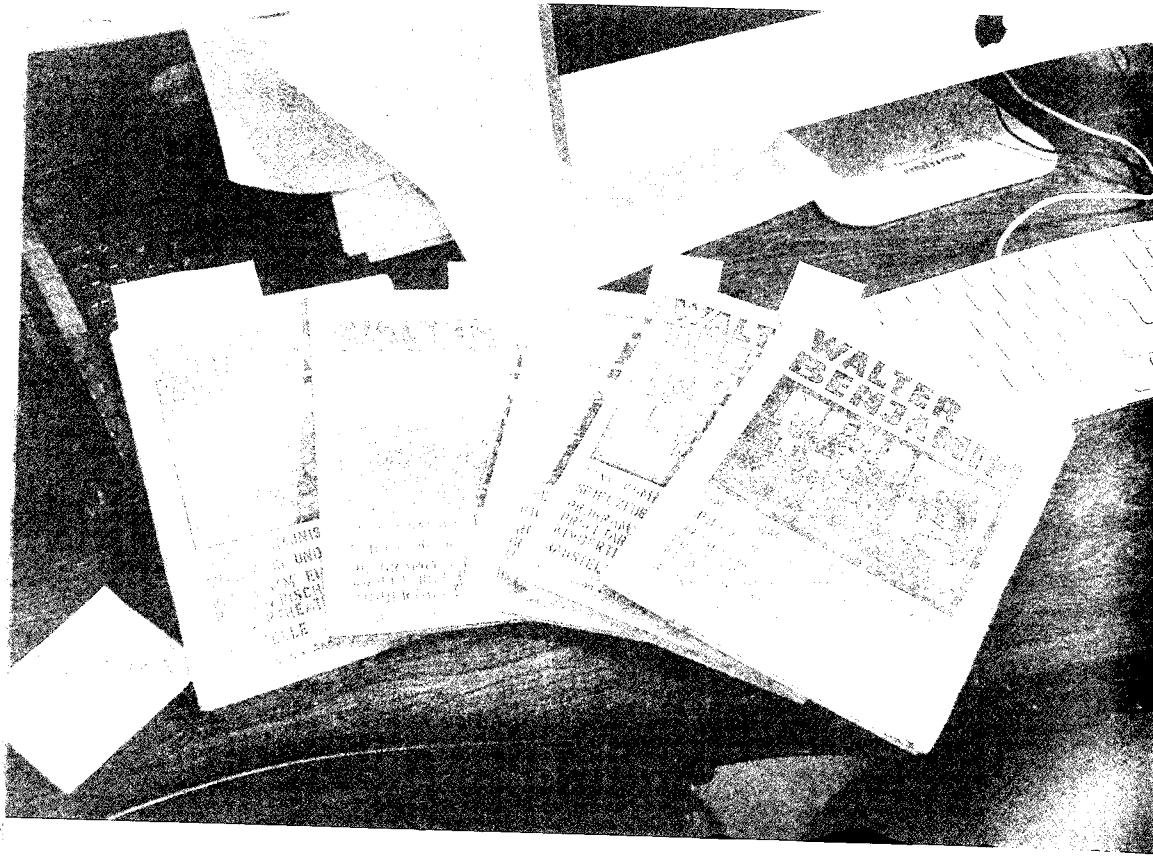

Fig. 12. Various pirate editions of Walter Benjamin, *Eine kommunistische Pädagogik. Spielzeug und Spielen. Programm eines proletarischen Kindertheaters. Baustelle + Diskussion + Anhang*, published by Zentralrat der sozialistischen Kinderläden, West Berlin, no. 2, 1969 (Raubdruck Archiv). Photo: Eva Weinmayr.

V

Artists and Activists

> **INNER VOICE:** It would be great to think about how such activist publishing practices are playing out today? And what do you think is the relation between such activities and artistic practice?

EVA WEINMAYR: That's a good question. What is the goal of artistic practice? In the cases we discussed earlier, piracy is always associated with the re-appropriation of somebody else's property against the law. It challenges the idea of knowledge as property. For me the role of the cultural pirate is more complex. It is a trickster, similar to the role of the artist, who has no predefined territory to roam, connects different areas of thought, and questions established ways of thinking. And this thinking translates into action. Often people who do great stuff just happen to be artists. I don't even think it is helpful to categorize such activities in artists or activists—the main thing is they intervene in the world and envision or create alternatives.

INNER VOICE: What do you think of piratical practices like *Amazon Noir*—an interventionist project by Alessandro Ludovico, Paolo Cirio, and the Vienna-based collective Übermorgen? In 2006, they hacked the code of Amazon's "Read inside the book"-feature and developed a "robot-perversion-technology" giving access to the entire content of a book rather than just a few preselected preview pages.

EVA WEINMAYR: It was such a great hack. It came as a real shock to Amazon who immediately took court action, which eventually resulted in Amazon buying the invention.[23] Other examples would be Sean Dockray and Fiona Whitton, who founded the online archive *aaaaarg.fail*, formerly *aaaaarg.org*, and Marcell Mars's online library *memoryoftheworld.org*. These are activist practices of today who create communities—on- and offline.

INNER VOICE: I came across *memoryoftheworld.org*, when Marcell Mars did the *Public Library* project in Stuttgart in 2014. It's the idea that people share their books online.

EVA WEINMAYR: The cataloging aspect is very important to them. They use Calibre, a flexible online cataloging software designed to organize your own e-book/pdf collection. You can search for a variety of terms such as title, author, date added, date published, size, rating, etc. And with the free downloadable "let's share books"-plugin you can also allow other people in the worldwide web to find and read your own cataloged e-books. A true and socially adequate public library is growing here.[24]

INNER VOICE: By comparison, *aaaaarg.org* comes from a slightly different angle. It is often understood solely as an open source platform for freely sharing books, but is actually born from a desire to share books with others in order to start a conversation.

EVA WEINMAYR: Yes, I think it developed from gatherings of the *Public School*, a self-organized educational project in Los Angeles, which started in 2007.[25] It was founded by Fiona Whitton and Sean Dockray. They felt that a curriculum always comes with an institutionalized agenda defining a prescribed canon

[23] See http://www.amazon-noir.com/index0000.html.

[24] Their mission statement is: "The Public Library is firstly—free access to books for every member of society, second—a library catalog, and third—a librarian. With books ready to be shared [online], meticulously cataloged, everyone is a librarian. When everyone is librarian, library is everywhere." Marcell Mars, Manar Zarroug, and Tomislav Medak, *End-to-End Catalog: Memory of the World*, November 26, 2012, https://www.memoryoftheworld.org/end-to-end-catalog/.

[25] "The Public School was initiated in 2007 in Los Angeles in the basement of Telic Arts Exchange. The Public School is a school with no curriculum. It is not accredited, it does not give out degrees, and it has no affiliation with the public school system. It is a framework that supports autodidactic activities, operating under the assumption that everything is in everything." See http://thepublicschool.org/la.

of learning. People propose classes they want to take or want to teach and collaborate in exploring the proposed subjects together. The German artist Cornelia Sollfrank conducted very informative interviews with Sean Dockray and Marcell Mars as part of her research project *Giving what you don't have* at Postmedialab, Leuphana University, Lüneburg, in 2012. You can watch all the interviews online.[26]

INNER VOICE: I heard that *Public School* has been spreading to other cities?

EVA WEINMAYR: That's right. Buenos Aires, Berlin, San Francisco, New York, Durham, Helsinki, London, Vienna, and the list goes on.

VI

Unsolicited Collaborations • Removing Authorship

INNER VOICE: Okay, maybe first say a few words about your and Andrea's Piracy Project.

EVA WEINMAYR: It started at Byam Shaw School of Art in London in order to fight the closure of its library. We launched an open call for copied, reproduced and altered books, which were added to the library collection. Within months we received an unpredictable variety of book projects taking wild and surprising approaches to appropriating somebody else's work.

INNER VOICE: Was it all material not represented in the library before?

EVA WEINMAYR: Partly. Sometimes several pirated and modified versions—or shall I say "interpretations"—of the same book lived just next to each other on the shelves. In some cases content has been added or erased, the size or graphic design "improved," books printed out from the internet, pushed through different platforms, algorithms, compressors or scanner software, printed professionally or with the just-about-to-dry-out ink jet printer at home. Some books credit the new author, others don't. Some disguise the alterations pretending to be the original book. A playful and subversive tension was created between the modified entries and the original books on the shelves. It is a wild almost freakish set of beasts we never expected to land on our table.

INNER VOICE: I guess, the infiltration of an art college library with such pirates unsettles a few traditional concepts and habits there? I mean, how do you figure out what constitutes the authoritative text and which is a clone variety or its interpretation?

EVA WEINMAYR: Actually some of the most interesting books reach us from outside the art world. Intrigued by Daniel Alarcon's article *Life Among the Pirates* [fig. 13],[27] Andrea traveled to Peru in 2010 and discovered a pirate version of Jaime Bayly's autobiographical novel *No se lo digas a nadie* in the street markets. This physical object may look obviously pirated to a trained eye but could easily pass as the original if you were not looking for differences. Crucial however: the pirate version has two extra chapters. And more: these extra chapters are well written—well enough to blend in. Now, here somebody borrows the author's voice, invents two chapters of his life without telling us. There is no indication in the book, that it has been altered [fig. 14, 15].[28]

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[26] See http://artwarez.org/projects/GWYDH/.

INNER VOICE: How would a librarian approach the task of cataloging such "unsolicited collaborations"? Who would be accounted as author?

EVA WEINMAYR: That is interesting. When we took the Piracy Collection to New York to install a temporary reading room at the New York Art Book Fair in 2011, a librarian from the Pratt Institute spent a lot of time browsing the books. She was fascinated by the richness of strategies and approaches to unauthorized copying. How people interfered with, copied and altered the book and confronted the questions these authorial hybrids pose. She wondered how this collection could be documented and cataloged from a librarian's point of view. What are the criteria for authorship? How can this category be defined? How do you deal with the awkward relationship between the original, the reference, and the pirate copy?

INNER VOICE: In this respect the books in the Piracy Collection live in a limbo, posing interesting questions and problems when it comes to institutional capture, which aims at streamlining and rendering everything into measurable and accountable units.

EVA WEINMAYR: In a wider sense this question is also relevant when we think of Higher Education, which in the current climate of commodifying education, aims to sell originality and individual authorship as a commercial asset to students. Collaborations among students for example are only valid, when each collaborator's part can be clearly defined—and assessed. This is pretty counter-productive, because the very nature of collaborating is that you inspire each other, that it becomes more than the sum of individual parts.

INNER VOICE: That's interesting, because today's education climate seems to just adopt the mechanism of the art market, which is fully based on signature and individual authorship, and therefore creates speculative commercial value. I am just thinking about what you said earlier about the circulation of Ed Ruscha's book.

EVA WEINMAYR: There is a striking example of what happens, when authorship is suddenly removed: the American artist Cady Noland summarily "de-authored" her work *Cowboys milking* (1990),

[27] Daniel Alarcon, "Life Among the Pirates," *Granta* 109 (2009): 9–36.

[28] See The Piracy Project's essay "The Impermanent Book," published on *Rhizome*, April 19, 2012, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/apr/19/impermanent-book/.

when it was put up for auction by a dealer against her will. Cady Noland has been named as the highest selling female artist ($6.6 m) in history. She removed her authorship of the work a few days before it was scheduled for auction at Sotheby's. As a result, the dealer Marc Jancou, who bought the work a few years ago for $101,000, could enjoy it in his living room, but not resell it as a Cady Noland work. It is a Cady Noland in his living room, but not on the market. Artist Melissa Gordon did a piece in *Persona Magazine* about it [fig. 16] and artist and lawyer Sergio Muñoz Sarmiento has written extensively about the case on his art & law blog *Clancco.org*, because Jancou sued Noland and the auction house.

> **INNER VOICE:** This is an amazing story. It really dismantles the speculative bubble and makes us think about how value is created. Who, and for what reason, defines the value? And how quickly this can collapse with the removal of the signature and authorship.

VII

Just Another Book

EVA WEINMAYR: There is actually a funny anecdote about Ed Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*. Art historian Douglas Crimp was once hired to do picture research for an industrial film about the history of transportation. He went into the New York Public Library and came across Ed Ruscha's booklet *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* in the transportation section, just next to books about automobiles, highways etc. Douglas Crimp recounts: "I remember thinking how funny it was that the book had been miscatalogued [...] I knew, as the librarians evidently did not, that Ruscha's book was a work of art and therefore belonged in the art division. But now, because of the reconfigurations brought about by postmodernism, I've changed my mind; I now know that Ed Ruscha's books make no sense in relation to the categories of art according to which art books are catalogued in the library, and that that is part of their achievement. The fact that there is nowhere for *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* within the present system of classification is an index of the book's radicalism with respect to established modes of thought."[29]

> **INNER VOICE:** Ed Ruscha must have been relieved, that at least in this instance, his book was "just another book."

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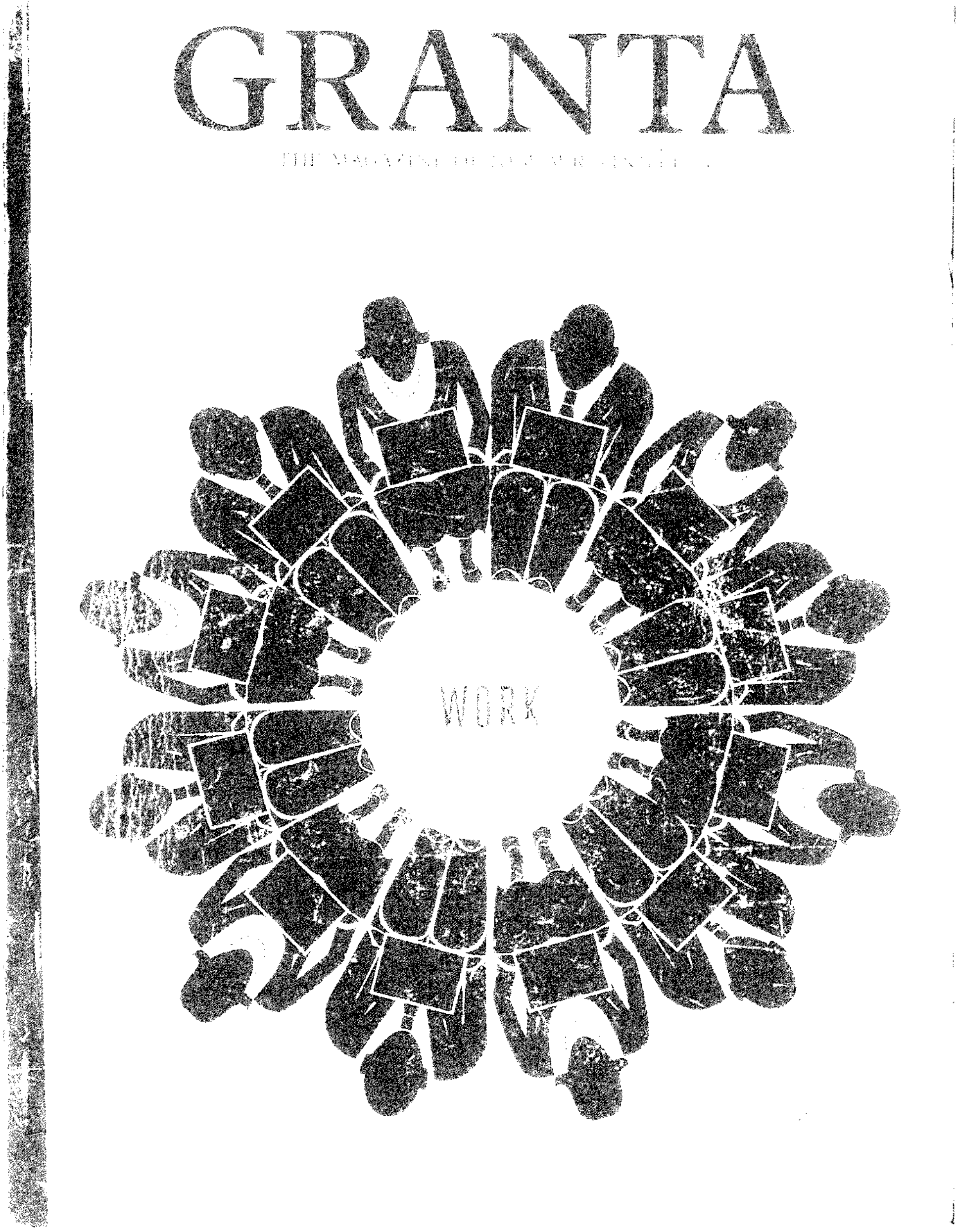
[29] Douglas Crimp and Louise Lawler, "The Museum's Old, the Library's New Subject," *On the Museum's Ruins*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 66–83, 78.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THE MAGAZINE OF NEW WRITING
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Fig. 13. Daniel Alarcon, "Life Among the Pirates," *Granta* 109 (2009).
© Granta and Portobello Books, 2015.

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No se lo digas
a nadie

Fig. 14. Jaime Bayly, *No se lo digas a nadie*, Lima: Punto de lectura, 2010 (The Piracy Collection).

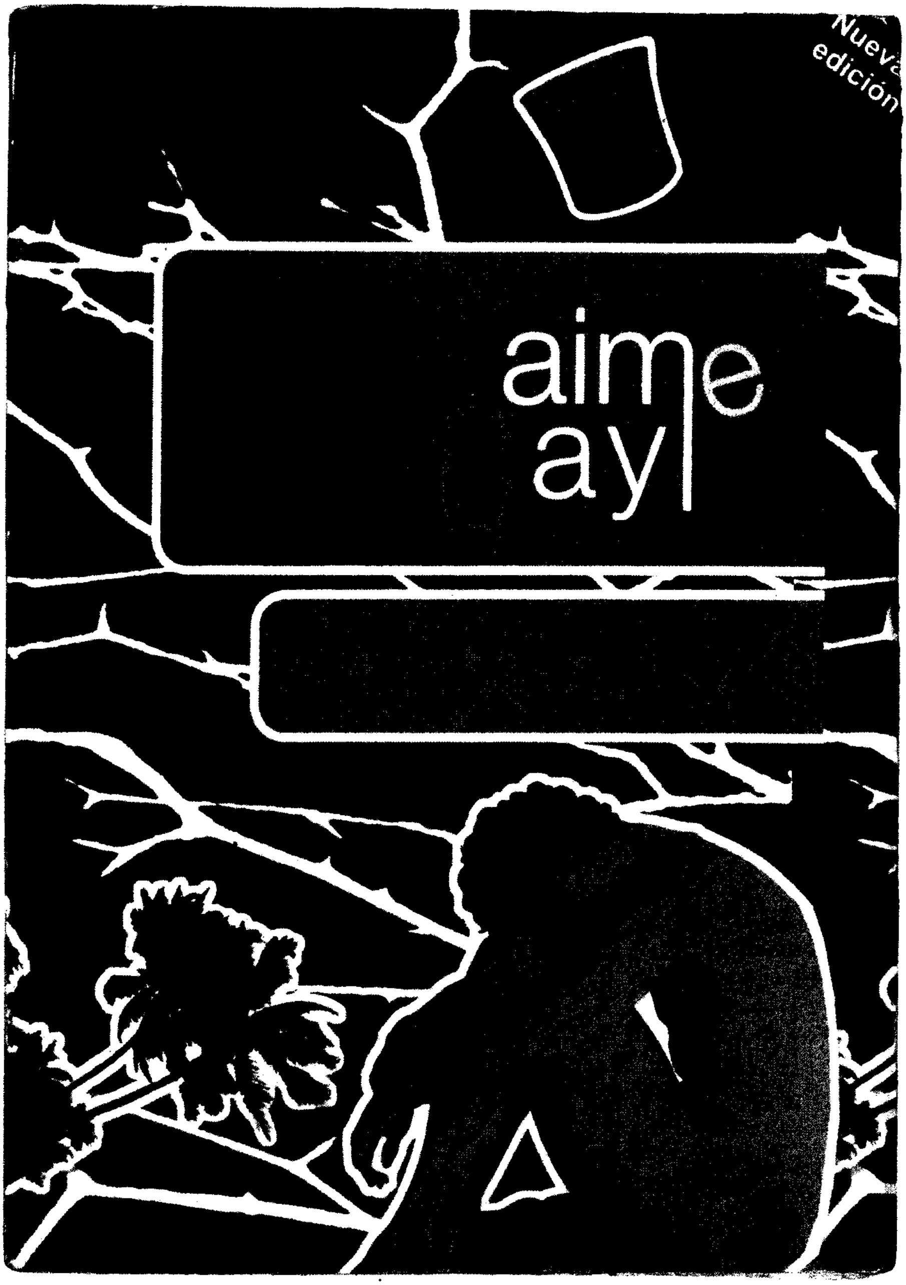
Nueva edición
aime
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Fig. 15. Jaime Bayly, *No se lo digas a nadie*, pirated copy with two extra chapters added by an anonymous writer. Bought in Lima, Peru (The Piracy Collection).

Appendix
Library Bill of Rights

American Library Association (1939, with several amendments until today)[30]

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should any library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.

2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views.

6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public.

← **Fig. 16.** Melissa Gordon and Marina Vishmidt, *Persona*, Berlin: Archive Books, 2013.

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[30] "Library Bill of Rights," http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill.

On Unpublishing: Fugitive Materiality and the Future of the Anthropocene Book

Paul Benzon

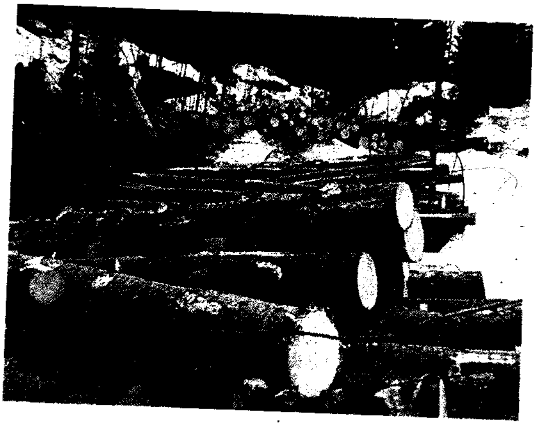

Fig. 1. *Future Library*, 2014–2114. Photo: © Katie Paterson, 2015. Commissioned by Bjørvika Utvikling.

The Undeath of the Book

> Funes remembered not only every leaf of every tree of every wood, but also every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it.
>
> **Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes the Memorious"[1]**

This is an essay, in a volume on publishing as artistic practice, about a corpus of unpublished works of fiction: texts that are to-date mostly virtual and imagined, texts that remain to be read and to be written, texts that in large part do not exist—yet. These texts will comprise the end output of Scottish artist Katie Paterson's *Future Library*,[2] a project started in 2014 with the planting of one thousand trees in Nordmarka, a forest outside of Oslo, Norway, and in progress until 2114, when the resulting paper will be used to print a series of books.[3] Every year between now and then, one author will be chosen by the Future Library Trust—a group composed of Paterson alongside various figures involved in publishing, the literary prize market, and library development—to contribute a text to the project. Canadian speculative fiction author Margaret Atwood, best known for her dystopian feminist novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and for her recent trilogy of novels on climate change and genetic engineering (*Oryx and Crake*, 2003; *The Year of the Flood*, 2009; *MaddAddam*, 2013[4]), was selected for the project's inaugural year, and handed over her manuscript on May 26, 2015. Until 2114, when all 100 texts are published, each text will be securely stored as it is written in a specially designed room in the New Public Library in Oslo. This room, designed by Paterson, will be constructed from wood derived from the trees in Nordmarka that were cleared to make room for the thousand trees that will in turn eventually provide the material for the coming books themselves.

Circulating and reverberating across time and space, Paterson's *Future Library* offers a speculative glimpse of the possibilities of publication in the twenty-second century—of the complex, contingent ways in which print writing might persist within an uncertain future. Projecting old media into new history, the project is, among other things, a complex statement in the ongoing cultural conversation about the future of the book. The death of the book in the face of electronic and digital media has been a common trope of literary discourse at least since Robert Coover's essay "The End of Books" in 1992.[5] These conversations inevitably betray the ideological and technological preoccupations of those involved, whether they be nostalgic or futurist. Paterson's project, by contrast, imagines a future media ecology different from either of those binary reactions, one defined neither by the death of the book nor by its digital afterlife or rebirth. On the contrary, the *Future Library* constitutes an extended meditation—indeed a meditation by way of extension—on the long, deep time of the book,[6] on the complexly recursive ways in which the paper codex circulates through time across a wide range of storage sites, substrates, and potentialities, coming into contact with a varied array of authors, editors, institutions, and infrastructures. Stretching the lifespan of the book ever so slightly toward geological time through the extended delay of storage time between writing and circulation, Paterson opens up a critical pleat in the temporalities of publishing technology, imagining a potential future not through the seemingly abstract futurity of the digital but rather by means of the radical elongation of paper. Her project stages a leveraged play upon the charged material relations between codex, archive, and environment that at once both suggests new temporalities and material configurations of publication and also throws those categories into question as historically overdetermined and profoundly contingent. In this essay, I trace Atwood's as-yet-unpublished and unread text across the spaces that comprise *Future Library*'s complex, delicate ecology—the document, the library, and the forest—in order to offer a theory of how print publication might provide critical purchase on questions of digitization, of its own obsolescence and persistence, and of the place of artistic practice within a space and time increasingly marked by the imminent possibilities of environmental crisis.

The Later Age of Print: Document, Object, Fugitive

> The new radicalism is paper. [...] Publish it on a printed page and no one will ever know about it.
>
> **Kenneth Goldsmith, "If It Doesn't Exist"[7]**

The external face of the *Future Library* is resolutely analog, rooted in the tangible, visible materiality of wood and paper. These old-media trappings are at once both aesthetic and technological: the living forest, the bound paper copies, and the wooden interior of the library room that collectively compose the project seem to speak strongly on behalf of the analog as a format with the capability to persist long after the obsolescence of any single given digital format. The *Library* imagines the old medium of paper growing older, its historical trajectory elongated into the future in a manner that outlasts the newness of the digital. Indeed, this singular persistence seems intended to supersede and upend the networked materiality and circulation of the digital. Out of the infinite reproducibility of the digital, Paterson seems to suggest, what will remain most secure a century from now is the singularity of the typescripts stored in the *Library*. In a further extension of the project's textual ecology, Paterson has designed a certificate that entitles the bearer to a complete set of the *Library*'s texts in 2114, but even these are only available in a limited edition—far fewer than the traditional print run of a notable author's work—and presumably at considerable cost. Thus in both of these instances, print authorship and publication yield rare artifacts, objects that take on a kind of renewed Benjaminian aura against the backdrop of contemporary digital replication and circulation.

Yet such a conceit elides the underlying digital backstory of the texts in question, at least in the instance of Atwood's inaugural volume. In 1998, N. Katherine Hayles noted that "[a]ll but a handful of books printed in the United States and Europe ... will be digitized during some phase of their existence. ... [E]ven print texts cannot escape being affected by information technologies,"[8] a claim that has surely become true for an even larger percentage of books since Hayles first made it more than fifteen years ago. Indeed, the robust presence of both artist and author on social media, and in particular Atwood's extensive engagement with writing technologies such as the digital publishing platform Wattpad and the remote robotic signing technology LongPen (her own invention) would strongly suggest that the multivalent trajectory Hayles describes applies to this first contribution to the *Library* as well.[9] Thus while the finished product will rest *in situ* in the *Library* as a hard-copy print typescript, handed over as such by Atwood, we have to assume that it existed first (and indeed still exists) as a digital file created by Atwood. The presumably born-digital status of this insistently paper text raises crucial yet unanswerable questions about its materiality and provenance: where does this text reside and circulate—where does it exist besides the hallowed, auratic singularity of the volume placed under lock and key in Oslo for the next hundred years? On Atwood's hard drive? On Paterson's? What other individuals involved with the project or the Trust have accessed it, and in what forms? How might such an origin story complicate the status of the printed text in Oslo, adding layers to its material historicity that augment and complicate its status as a print object rather than detracting from it?

As these questions suggest, Atwood's text occupies a strangely paradoxical state as a media object. A work by a prolific major author widely publicized but paradigmatically not published in any conventional sense of the term, it exists, at least for the next hundred years, in a highly inaccessible print run of one.[10] Its publication status and its technological format simultaneously shape one another and throw one another into relief: the digital version of the text, seemingly infinitely replicable, remains paradoxically secure and all but singular, possessed only by the small group directly involved with the project. Yet the paper version, the object ultimately destined for publication, is nearly equally singular, strangely no more or less publicly accessible than the digital. Either form could circulate more widely, particularly the digital, of course, yet it is central and definitive to the project that neither form does—that the varied material reproducibility of these parallel textual objects is underscored precisely by being subverted and short-circuited.

In both formats, then, Atwood's text exemplifies what Mark Sample imagines as the category of fugitive texts, "fading away before our eyes, slipping away in the dark, texts we apprehend only in glimpses and glances. Texts that remind us what it means to disappear completely forever. The fugitive text stands in defiant opposition to the archive. The fugitive text exists only as ... a trace, a lingering presence that confirms the absence of a presence."[11] One of the key models for Sample's theory of the fugitive text is Don DeLillo's novel *Mao II*, in which the reclusive novelist Bill Gray withholds his ever-expanding novel from publication as a means of distinction and resistance against "the always-available logic of the marketplace."[12] In his notes for the novel, DeLillo writes that "[i]n the world of glut+bloat, the withheld work of art becomes the only meaningful object."[13] In its flickering presence, intensely discussed but barely seen, Atwood's contribution to the *Library* resembles Gray's novel as a withheld fugitive text, an exception within and against the constant streams of contemporary media culture that exerts presence by way of its absence. Yet the crucial difference between the two texts is that Gray's is a wholly print and paper object, produced on typewriter (like DeLillo's works themselves) and existing nowhere other than in the author's basement, while Atwood's text presumably has a digital origin point. However, the infinite reproducibility and accessibility made possible by such an origin ultimately constitutes a kind of material null set, leading through the constraints of the project back to singularity, absence, and fugitivity, conditions that are thrown all the more into relief against the digital moment in which Paterson's project takes place.

In this sense, both Atwood's single text and the project as a whole constitute an extreme instance of what Jessica Pressman describes as "the fetishized focus on textuality and the book-bound reading object"[14] that characterizes the early twenty-first century's aesthetic of bookishness. For Pressman, contemporary bookishness

> "is not merely another form of postmodern reflexivity in which the author toys with the reader in a layered process of simulacra. ... [T]his iteration of the aesthetic of bookishness differs from bookish aesthetics of the past. The novel projects digital technologies into the book format as a means of combating the simultaneous peril of information loss and the ideology of transcendental data that constitute discourse network 2000."[15]

Viewed from the perspective of Pressman's theory, Atwood's text is perhaps the most bookish book imaginable. The analog materiality of this media object within the digital world collapses the distinctions between information loss and transcendental data that Pressman notes. It verges on a kind of technological sublime not because of its transcendent, ubiquitous accessibility but rather through a profoundly immanent absence, the inaccessibility of the text in either print or digital form. Atwood's text registers as most bookish precisely in its status as a fugitive text, and conversely underscores bookishness as defined most urgently in terms of material extremity—the ways in which the presence and absence of a textual object become dually charged and radicalized within a culture of information. Thus Paterson's bookishness goes beyond referentiality or reflexivity, the simulational hall of mirrors Pressman notes as characteristic of an earlier moment. It raises the question of how the extremes of technological reproducibility and singularity lie uneasily alongside and within one another across time as markers of a constantly shifting media culture that is always already split and scattered between analog and digital modes. The future imagined by *Future Library* exists in print, a technology designed for ongoing accessibility and compatibility—qualities that become increasingly difficult for digital texts to sustain over time as they face obsolescence and decay. Yet at least for the present moment, this print archive cannot help but speak of the digital as well, even and especially through omission. It carries the digital into the future as an absent presence haunting paper, one medium tracing and leaving traces upon the other, the fugitive origin of a fugitive text.

Discourse Networks 1614/2114: Archive, Unpublication, Archaeology, Silence

> The absent library takes part in an uncanny accounting: ordering and tabulating every addition to a catalogue by a subtractive deduction; sketching a pinax of absence; and bartering ruthlessly in a general economy of anticipatory and permanent deaccession.
>
> Craig Dworkin, *The Perverse Library*[16]

Can we consider Atwood's text—or any text, for that matter—a publication if it remains private and inaccessible to the public for the foreseeable natural lives of the author, the artist, and the vast majority of the reading public alive at the time of its printing? What might it mean to reimagine publishing—the making public of written work—as by definition a private act? Is Paterson Atwood's future publisher? Her future archivist, editor, curator? Where does she place these roles within the field of public and private action? In his seminal essay "What Is an Author?" Michel Foucault raises a series of dually "theoretical and technical" questions regarding the boundaries of an author's *oeuvre*:

> "When undertaking the publication of Nietzsche's works, for example, where should one stop? Surely everything must be published, but what is 'everything'? Everything that Nietzsche himself published, certainly. And what about the rough drafts for his works? Obviously. The plans

> for his aphorisms? Yes. The deleted passages and the notes at the bottom of the page? Yes. What if, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, one finds a reference, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: Is it a work, or not? Why not? And so on, ad infinitum."[17]

Foucault's questions here are designed to stretch the bounds of authorship past the breaking point, to imagine an archive that includes everything—published, unpublished, deleted, ephemeral, incidental—and in doing so overwhelms and overwrites the very conception of the author. Yet gazing at the locked door of the *Future Library*, unable to access its single text, we find ourselves staring down the inverse of these provocations: while Foucault asks the overarching question of how far we can expand the scope of an author's work, Paterson asks what possibilities and questions emerge through the circumscription of publication. What is a publisher when she does not publish? Rather than imagining an inquiry into "everything," Paterson calls upon us to consider void, absence, and delay.

Should we understand this text as part of Atwood's bibliography, and if so, how? And when? Surely it is a work written by her, but if we take Foucault at his word, so is everything she commits to paper, disk, drive, or network. Paterson's deep concern with literary history and the archive in *Future Library* challenges us to imagine a more granular approach to authorial time at the same time that it dissolves the possibility of such an approach back into time. Should this text appear on the "also by Margaret Atwood" page in the front matter of her next (published) text? If not then, perhaps upon publication a century from now, its author long dead, perhaps no longer even in print? How would such crisscrossing expansions to her catalog—one proleptic, one retrospective—complicate how we understand the temporality of her career? These questions seem trivial, mired in the minutiae of bibliography and biography, yet I raise them precisely for that reason: the extreme Nietzschean archival proliferation that Foucault imagines finds its uncanny double in the extreme withdrawal of this unseen text, its absent presence as a fugitive text in the authorial archive.

Indeed, as much as these are authorial questions, they are also profoundly archival and bibliographical ones, bound up with and within the locked space of the library. Thus as a way of framing the archival stakes of the *Library*, and of turning to the physical space of the library itself, I want to offer the deceptively simple proposition that Atwood's text is unpublished. I mean this not in the simple, literal sense of being not published, written but never publicly circulated, as in the case of the Nietzschean manuscripts Foucault imagines. The unpublication I have in mind here is more dramatic and radical. Whereas Nietzsche's unpublished writings are unpublished as an indirect, incidental byproduct of a larger authorial career, the *Library*'s unpublication is the very center of the project. Indeed, by unpublication I mean not the absence or deferral of publication but its utter inverse: the printing of texts in order to be secreted, held from view, and circulated in the secure space of the library room. Conceptual poet Kenneth Goldsmith, whom I quote in the epigraph to the previous section of this essay, has famously declared that "If it doesn't exist on the internet, it doesn't exist."[18] If we take Goldsmith's provocation at face value, the *Library*'s space of sequestration becomes visible as the key vehicle in keeping its texts from existing, retaining them within absence and secrecy. The century-long deferral, the secured space, the isolated codex—all of these elements of the project function together to subvert the conventional trajectories of publication, replacing them with absence and with the blankness of enduring space and time, an unseen text locked within an all-but-empty textual space.

Both in spite of and because of the project's name, the library of *Future Library* is a deeply retro space, a library of the past as much as of the future. In addition to the space's focus on printed paper texts and its carefully sourced wooden construction, it also includes a printing press. Given the spatial constraints of the library and Paterson's comment that the project will "hold[] workshops for the next generations in printing and binding books,"[19] it seems likely that this press will be a fairly small and technologically primitive one. These deliberate anachronisms, destined to be all the more anachronistic a century from now, frame *Future Library* as a multilayered project of media archaeology. Jussi Parikka describes this critical and artistic discipline as

> "a way to investigate the new media cultures through insights from past new media, often with an emphasis on the forgotten, the quirky, the non-obvious apparatuses, practices and interventions. [...] Media archaeology sees media cultures as sedimented and layered, a fold of time and materiality where the past might be suddenly discovered anew, and the new technologies grow obsolete increasingly fast."[20]

Indeed, as much as the space of the library preserves the texts chosen for the project, it also preserves an imminently anachronistic scene and practice of reading, providing the apparatus by which future readers might project themselves back doubly in time to the moment of print culture. Writing on the history of storage media, Leah Marcus compares the discursive characteristics of three different technological moments: the mutable noise and collective reading practices of manuscript culture, the silence of the archive and the library in the moment of early print, and the return to the noise of cyberspace in the emergence of the digital. She argues that in contrast to the noisy, dynamic modalities of premodern and postmodern inscription and storage, "so obviously mutable and 'alive,' so vulnerable to alteration and loss," "[w]e associate libraries, collections of knowledge, and systems for memory retrieval with silence and hence with permanence."[21] In keeping with this sensibility, the *Library* resurrects a rapidly receding past for the future, dramatically rehearsing and preserving the very silence that Marcus suggests must accompany and characterize any stable preservation effort.

Yet the temporalized space of the library is not simply a space of return, but also a space of deferral and anticipation. The *Library*'s archaic recuperation of the past is inseparable from its speculative projection into the future. Through the near-empty space of the *Library*, the time of the project becomes dramatically stretched beyond the lifespans of its initial creators: Paterson remarks, "[w]hen I had the idea for *Future Library* I knew instantly it would outlive me (and most of us alive today). It is important that I do not see it fully realised—it is a work conceived for an unknown, future generation."[22] This space, then, is proleptically haunted by the future, paradoxically filled by both the absent presence of the books to come, and the gradual, inevitable disappearance of those texts' mortal writers, selectors, and readers. Its silence is not the silence of solitary, modern print reading, but rather the silence of the unread, of the untimely absence of reading—the silence of a space occupied not by reading humans, but by unread books.

@wood: Place, Trees, Economies, Ecologies

> There was a lot of trash cluttering the streets—burnt things, broken things. Not only cars and trucks. Glass—a lot of that. Shackie said we had to be careful which buildings we went into: they'd been right near one when it collapsed. We should stay away from the tall ones because the fires could have eaten away at them, and if the glass windows fell on you, goodbye head. It would be safer in a forest than a city now. Which was the reverse of what people used to think.
>
> **Margaret Atwood, *Year of the Flood***

The complex, delicate ecology of *Future Library*'s components invokes the equally delicate, deeply contingent ecology that the project resides within. Both Paterson and Atwood have remarked on the project's direct confrontation of an uncertain environmental future: Atwood states, "This project, at least, believes the human race will still be around in a hundred years!"[23] a proclamation that seems almost to protest too much. Paterson, when asked in an interview, "Are you pessimistic about the future? Or does art give you hope?" answers with a sharply hedged description of the *Library*'s physical defenses:

> "The room I'm designing for the Oslo Library that will hold the manuscripts will be on the fifth floor, among the special collections and archives. So they will be kept safe, even if the fjords pour into the land. Which could happen. Margaret even said that, in 100 years, Norway may not even exist as a country. Perhaps these futures that are being written now will come true in 100 years. I don't know who'll read them. Maybe they'll be like the characters in Margaret's books."[24]

Here Paterson imagines the speculative dimension of the *Library* as particularly charged, the projection of literary reading and writing not only into a profoundly uncertain future, but also indeed a future characterized by precisely the uncertainty that has long preoccupied its first contributor. In this sense, Paterson's choice of Atwood as the *Library*'s first author foregrounds the project's self-conscious engagement with the possibility of environmental crisis; after all, if any living author is aware of the possibilities for radical social upheaval around environmental change in the next century, it is Atwood herself. How, then, to leverage against this imminent threat? How to protect the words, ideas, and materials of the project from the very same ecological crises that they themselves might imagine?

Future Library engages these problems through an uncanny discursive conservation of mass: Paterson's initial clearing of the forest space in Oslo provides wood for the construction of the library room, which will eventually be filled with books produced from trees growing in the repopulated initial space—a kind of Möbius strip between the space of the forest and the space of the library over the next century.[25] Yet Paterson's work is not merely a simple restoration through replanting, as if in some defanged, print culture version of the neoliberal carbon offset. On the contrary, by leaving the texts of the *Library* radically unpublished for as long as 100 years, planting trees that replace the ones she has cut and will only later serve as material for the *Library*'s books, she inverts the conventional terms of this ecological/textual transaction. The project replenishes and accumulates wood in advance, in a manner that simultaneously repays the environmental debt incurred by the library and saves toward the future moment of publication. Here again the self-referentiality from which Pressman distinguishes contemporary bookishness gives way to a complex interdependence between the narrative possibilities of the text and the material and environmental concerns of the project. However much Atwood's text might blur the bounds between fiction and reality, imagining the conditions of the future that it waits to be read within, its position within the *Library* is not a mere metafiction detached from material reality, but rather part of the project's complex reflection on the stakes of its own material and environmental context—a conservational project in both the archival and environmental senses of the word.

My use of economic language—transaction, debt, repayment—to describe the ecology of normal print publishing above is deliberate, and intended to resonate on a number of levels. Most broadly, as recent conversations regarding the temporal boundaries of the Anthropocene period have shown, climate change is inextricably bound up with the *longue durée* of globalization and market capitalism, whether grounded in the moment of European arrival in the Americas, the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of nuclear weapons, or another event.[26] But the economics of climate change also inform *Future Library* in particular given the project's location in Norway, a nation that has been at the forefront of REDD (reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) transactions, in which developed nations pay aid to developing nations in return for an agreement to slow or cease deforestation.[27] A full discussion of the geopolitical, economic, and ecological stakes of the REDD market is beyond the scope of my work here, but the presence of such a history in Norway resonates powerfully against the material, technological, and ecological poetics of Paterson's *Future Library*; in this context, then, the forest of the project stands in not only for other texts and moments across time, but also for other global spaces within an economically and ecologically uneven present.

Like the library space itself, then, this forest is layered with the uncertainty of human time both there and elsewhere. Indeed, notwithstanding the belief and hope that Atwood and Paterson mention in the passages above, the expanded duration of the *Library* means that the project may not have a chance to end, at least as planned—that some texts may end up unpublished not by choice but by contingency, as well as perhaps altogether unchosen and unwritten, left virtual and latent in the silent forest. Yet uncannily, *Future Library*'s intrinsic silence and emptiness limns this possible end precisely as the project leverages against it, investing now in the unpublished and the unread in order to retrieve new texts through ancient means in the future, storing and sequestering books in the hope of readers. This tension raises an aporia that cuts across time, textuality, medium, and environment: How can literature invest in the future of the planet, not in discursive, linguistic terms, but in material, technological ones? Perhaps, Paterson suggests, only by remaining out of sight and out of reach, locked in the library and latent in the silent forest, teasing and testing us with the challenge of its fugitive inaccessibility. Perhaps, then, literature might remain only by disappearing—at least for now.

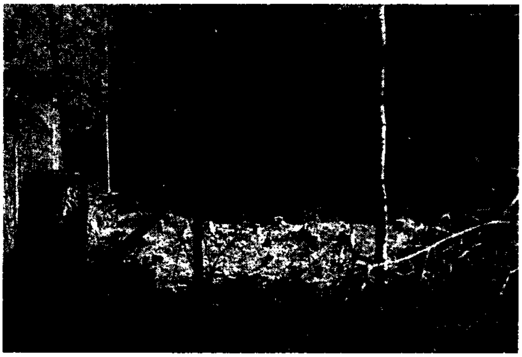

Fig. 2. *Future Library*, 2014–2114.
Photo: © Bjørvika Utvikling by Kristin von Hirsch, 2015.
Commissioned by Bjørvika Utvikling.

1 I would like to thank Katie Paterson and Siobhan Maguire for generously providing information and images to support this essay, and Annette Gilbert and Kristen Mueller for their thoughtful comments on an earlier version of the text. Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes the Memorious," in *Labyrinths*, trans. James E. Irby (New York: New Directions Press, 1962).

2 Katie Paterson, *Future Library – Framtidsbiblioteket – Katie Paterson*, accessed April 1, 2015, http://futurelibrary.no/.

3 The finite number of trees planted for the project raises a complex set of questions regarding how many pages such a forest could yield, and how many sets of the *Library's* books such an archive could consequently allow for. All of the variables in play here (pages per tree, pages per book, and number of sets) are moving targets: the number of pages per book is of course determined by each individual author (inaugural author Margaret Atwood has noted that each contribution can be "one word. It can be a poem. It can be a story. It can be a novel" [Ed Finn, "An Interview With Margaret Atwood," *Slate*, February 6, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2015/02/margaret_atwood_interview_the_author_speaks_on_hope_science_and_the_future.html]), and Paterson's website describes the number of sets only as "limited." Different sources also offer different conceptions of the number of pages of paper yielded by a tree. The Sierra Club, an American conservation organization, offers an estimate of between 10,000 and 20,000 sheets of 8½×11" paper per tree (Bob Schildgen, "Green Life: How Much Paper Does One Tree Produce?" *Sierra*, July 4, 2014, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2014-4-july-august/green-life/how-much-paper-does-one-tree-produce).

4 Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (New York: Ballantine, 1986); *Oryx and Crake* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2003); *The Year of the Flood* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2009); *MaddAddam* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 2013).

5 Robert Coover, "The End of Books," *New York Times Review of Books*, June 21, 1992, 23–25. On the more recent wave of conversations regarding the death and life of the book, see Jessica Pressman, "The Aesthetic of Bookishness in Twenty-First-Century Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 48, no. 4 (fall 2009), accessed August 17, 2015, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0048.402.

6 See Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

7 Kenneth Goldsmith, "If It Doesn't Exist on the Internet, It Doesn't Exist," September 27, 2005, accessed April 15, 2015, http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/if_it_doesnt_exist.html.

8 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 43.

9 See, for example, Atwood's active Twitter account *Margaret E. Atwood (@MargaretAtwood)*, accessed April 14, 2015; her article "Why Wattpad Works," *The Guardian*, July 6, 2012, accessed April 12, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jul/06/margaret-atwood-wattpad-online-writing; and André Voshart, "Robotic arm extends authors' signatures over cyberspace," *Design Engineering*, April 17, 2009, accessed May 12, 2015, http://www.design-engineering.com/motion-control/robotic-arm-extend-authors-signatures-over-cyberspace-10411/.

10 For a record of this unpublished publicity, see the "Press" page of the *Library* website.

11 Mark Sample, "The Archive or the Trace: Cultural Permanence and the Fugitive Text," January 18, 2010, accessed August 17, 2015, http://www.samplereality.com/2010/01/18/the-archive-or-the-trace-cultural-permanence-and-the-fugitive-text/.

12 Ibid.

13 Quoted in ibid.

14 Pressman, "The Aesthetic of Bookishness in Twenty-First-Century Literature."

15 Ibid.

16 Craig Dworkin, *The Perverse Library* (York: Information as Material, 2010).

17 Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books 1991), 103–104. For a different extrapolation of Foucault's argument into the digital, see Matthew Kirschenbaum, "What Is an @uthor?" *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 6, 2015, accessed October 18, 2015, https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/uthor.

18 Goldsmith, "If It Doesn't Exist on the Internet, It Doesn't Exist."

19 Mariann Enge, "In a Hundred Years All Will Be Revealed," *Kunstkritikk*, June 30, 2014, accessed October 16, 2015, http://www.kunstkritikk.com/nyheter/in-a-hundred-years-all-will-be-revealed.

20 Jussi Parikka, *What is Media Archaeology?* (Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 3.

21 Leah S. Marcus, "The Silence of the Archive and the Noise of Cyberspace," in *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*, ed. Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday (London: Routledge, 2000), 24.

22 Enge, "In a Hundred Years."

23 M. H. Miller, "Margaret Atwood Joins Katie Paterson's Public Art Project, 'Future Library,'" *ArtNews*, September 5, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015, http://www.artnews.com/2014/09/05/margaret-atwood-joins-katie-patersons-public-art-project-future-library.

24 Neal Frizzell, "An Artist Is Growing a Forest That'll Become a Library of Books in 100 Years," *Vice*, October 22, 2014, accessed April 14, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/an-artist-is-growing-an-entire-forest-in-norway-to-become-a-book-anthology-in-100-years-916.

25 Paterson also sees this kind of material resonance and return at the microscopic level of the project: "The idea to grow the trees to print the books arose for me initially through making a connection with tree rings—to chapters, the material nature of paper, pulp, words, books—and imagining the writer's thoughts infusing themselves, 'becoming' the trees. Almost as if the trees absorb the writer's words like air or water, and the tree rings become chapters, spaced out over the years to come," eventually becoming pages and books that will themselves hold the authors' words. Enge, "In a Hundred Years."

26 See Simon Lewis and Mark A. Maslin, "Defining the Anthropocene," *Nature* 519 (March 12, 2015): 171–180 for one recent, if debated, discussion of the periodization of the Anthropocene.

27 Norway has brokered REDD deals with Brazil, Guyana, Indonesia, and Liberia. For a fuller discussion of the ethics and economics of REDD, see Filipa Ioannou, "Norway Gives Liberia $150 Million to Stop Cutting Down Trees," *Slate*, September 23, 2014, accessed April 17, 2015, http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2014/09/23/norway_liberia_deforestation_money_aid_for_promise_to_save_trees.html and James Surowiecki, "Climate Trades," *The New Yorker*, October 13, 2014, accessed August 17, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/10/13/climate-trades.

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0x0a 26, 105, 107–108, 110, 296
&So 241

aaaaarg.fail/aaaaarg.org 34, 273
AA Bronson 207
Åbäke 222
Abyzov, Juriy Ivanovich 158–160
Adams, Thomas R. 37n, 162n
Adnan, Etel 243
Agamben, Giorgio 188
Akeley, Carl 150
Akhmatova, Anna 161n
Aksënov, Vasiliy 161, 163
Alarcon, Daniel 275, 277
Alatalo, Sally 122
Alberro, Alexander 207
Alden, Todd 207
Aldrovandi, Ulisse 142–143, 145
Alekseyev, Nikita 166
Alexenberg, Melvin L. 103
Almqvist & Wiksell 44–45
Althamer, Pawel 199
Althusser, Louis 95n
Amazon 20, 25, 97, 101, 130, 203, 230, 263, 273, 296
Amerika, Mark 207
AND Publishing 222, 225n, 264n, 297
Anderson, John G. T. 135, 152n
Anderson, Wes 303
Antoon, Sinan 239
Apian, Peter 135
Appadurai, Arjun 202–203
Aragon, Louis 67
Arakawa, Shūsaku 243
Arcangel, Cory 122
Arendt, Hannah 244
Assange, Julian 231
Assayas, Olivier 238–242
Atwood, Margaret 30, 283–288, 290–292, 293n
Aymé, Marcel 66n
Azevedo, Luís 303

Badlands Unlimited 224n
Baers, Michael 207
Baetens, Jan 126
Bajohr, Hannes 9, 12, 18, 21–22, 26, 31, 38n, 39n, 224n, 296
Bakhchanyan, Vagrich 168n
Balthaus, Fritz 21, 211–213
Balzac, Honoré de 41, 70
Banner, Fiona 219–220, 224n
Barbey d'Aurevilly, Jules 64
Barker, Nicholas 37n, 162n
Barnes & Noble 101
Barthes, Roland 57, 64, 121
Bartlett, Neil 123
basbooks 105
Baskerville, John 81
Batten, Luke 207
Baudelaire, Charles 64
Baudrillard, Jean 96n
Baxter, Iain 59
Bayly, Jaime 30, 39n, 275, 278–279
Bazarnik, Katarzyna 18
Beaulieu, Derek 207
Bedel, Delphine 9, 36n
Belafonte, Harry 247
Belon, Pierre 142
Beltrán, Erick 207
Bénabou, Marcel 63–65
Benjamin, Walter 121, 264, 266, 272, 285
Bennequin, Jérémie 207
Benoît, Pierre André 41
Benton, Megan 76
Benveniste, Émile 188
Benzon, Paul 30, 296
Beuys, Joseph 242
Bezos, Jeff 263
Bhaskar, Michael 10–11, 23, 26, 28, 39n, 224n
Bianco, Anita di 207
Bitov, Andrey 161, 163
Blake, William 18, 41
Blanchot, Maurice 92n
Blessing, Jan 7–8
Blumenberg, Hans 103–104, 296
Blurb 101–102, 105, 221
Bochner, Mel 123–124
Boehme, Doro 207
Boglione, Riccardo 207
Boiter, Albert 207
Bolaño, Roberto 67n, 242–243
BookCrossing 34, 235
Borges, Jorge Luis 66, 67n, 72, 139, 238, 283
Boulanger, Sylvie 207
Bourgeois, Louise 238
Bove, Carol 207
Brand, Stewart 251, 254–255, 264
Brandt, Line 188
Brecht, George 165, 202
Brenson, Michael 121, 131
Bréton, André 26, 64
Bretonne, Rétif de la/Restif de la 18, 64
Brezhnev, Leonid 164
Brisson, Mathurin Jacques 146–149
Brodsky, Joseph 161–162
Broodthaers, Marcel 46, 303
Brouwn, Stanley 201
Brown, Eleanor Vonne 207
Brulé, Émeline 233
Brunon, Bernard 54, 60–61
Bruns, Gerald 92
Buchmann, Sabeth 207
Büchner, Georg 66
Buffon, Georges-Louis Leclerc de 146–150
Bürner, Susanne 207

Cabell, Mimi 112–113
Câdor, Amir Brito 207
Caecus, Appius Claudius 242
Cage, John 239
Calvino, Italo 71
Campbell, Barbara 123, 133
Campe, Rüdiger 162n
Carrión, Ulises 16, 19–20, 38n, 57n, 209, 241
Carpenter, J. R. 107
Casares, Adolfo Bioy 66, 67n, 72
Cassem, K. Antranik 27, 296
castillo/corrales 49n
Cather, Willa 78–79
Céline, Louis-Ferdinand 65n, 66n
Cella, Bernhard 9, 26–27, 29, 31, 34, 36n, 207, 224n, 296
Cennetoğlu, Banu 207
Cervantes, Miguel de 64, 72
Chalon, Renier 67
Charlesworth, Sarah 227
Charlston, Lin 207
Chartier, Roger 19
Christmann, Pia 296, 303
Chuykov, Ivan 168
Chyr, Willy 123
Cicero, Marcus Tullius 43, 244
Ciliberto, Giulia 222
Cirio, Paolo 25, 228, 273
Clark, James Lippitt 150
Clay, Steve 207
Coers, Albert 207
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 77
Condorelli, Céline 237, 244
Conrad, Joseph 101
Continuous Project 54
Cook, Julie 207
Coover, Robert 284
Coracle Press 16, 42, 44, 47–50
Corot, Camille 238
Cortázar, Julio 155
Coupland, Douglas 303
Cramer, Florian 103, 106n
Creuzer, Friedrich 56
Crimp, Douglas 276
Cutts, Simon 41–44, 47–50, 59
Cuvier, Georges 144
Czech, Natalie 207

Dahlberg, Kajsa 122
Danielewski, Mark Z. 18, 76, 82–87
Dante Aligheri 72
Darnton, Robert 9–10, 156, 162n
Darwin, Charles 139
Daston, Lorraine 144
Davey, Moyra 238, 243–244
Davis, Adam 207
Deary, Terry 263–264
Debord, Guy Louis 188
Degas, Edgar 238
Degot, Ekaterina 173
Deleuze, Gilles 132
DeLillo, Don 286
Déon, Michel 66n
Dermience, Sonia 207
Derrida, Jacques 84, 86, 214, 225n, 242
Desjardin, Arnaud 207
Dewey, Melvil 260–261
Dexter Sinister 260n, 262
Diderot, Denis 64
Dockray, Sean 273–274

Doeringer, Eric 207
Doggett, Sue 207
Donskoy, Gennadiy 168
D'Ormesson, Jean 66n
Dostoevsky, Fëdor 176
Downey, Brad 207
Downsborough, Peter 201
Doyle, Arthur Conan 66
Draxler, Helmut 120–121
Duchamp, Marcel 35, 53, 60, 124
DuMont, Alfred Neven 267
Duras, Marguerite 71
Duval, Céline 207
Dwiggins, William Addison 75–81, 84
Dworkin, Craig 54n, 287

eBay 203, 214
Ebner, Martin 207
Éditions de la montagne 41
Éditions Lorem Ipsum 12, 21–22, 70, 72–73, 297
Edizioni Periferia 16
Egan, Jennifer 75, 80
Elcano, Juan Sebastian 136
Ellis, Brett Easton 113
Emerson, Ralph Waldo 77
Englander, Nathan 80–81
Engramer, Sammy 207
Eriksson, Leif 41–42, 44–45, 47, 51
eschenau summer press 42, 47
Etiman, Yusuf 207
EVS (Eigenverlag stinkt) 209
Exempla 42, 44

Fabricius, Jacob 207
Fabricius, Jesper 207
Facebook 199, 203, 296
Fajfer, Zenon 18
Fake, Edie 207
Farber, Paul Lawrence 147
Faylor, J. Gordon 106, 109
Federman, Raymond 18
Feldman, Julia Pelta 110
Feldman, Morton 239
Fel'dman-Konrad, Natal'ya Isayevna 159
Filipovic, Elena 124–125
Filliou, Robert 46, 59
Findeisen, Leo 296
Finlay, Ian Hamilton 41, 43
Fiore, Quentin 303
Fisher, Marc 207
Fitterman, Robert 91n, 207
Flaubert, Gustave 56–57, 65, 66n, 73
Flavien, Jean-Pascal 207
Flusser, Vilém 105
Foer, Jonathan Safran 82–83, 87
Foster, Gordon 196
Foucault, Michel 54–57, 60–61, 73, 121, 133, 145, 223n, 287–288
Francke, Andrea 253, 263, 264n, 297

Fraser, Nancy 39n
Freire, Mela Dávila 202
Freuchen, Jan 207
Freud, Anna and Sigmund 264
Friedman, Ken 45
Frohmann Verlag 110n
Funcke, Bettina 54

Gagosian, Larry, 209
García Márquez, Gabriel 265–266, 268–269
Gasc, Anne-Valérie 207
Gass, William H. 18
Gauss PDF 102, 105–109
Gente, Peter 207
Gerlovin, Valeriy 162, 168n
Gerlovina, Rimma 162, 168n
Gessner, Conrad 137–143, 145, 147, 149
Giacometti, Alberto 245
Giffin, Lawrence 109, 111
Gilbert, Annette 21, 30, 38n, 57n, 126, 207, 296
Gins, Madeline 243
Ginzburg, Aleksandr 156n
Giono, Jean 69, 71
Gisbourne, Mark 207
Glicksberg, Kate 207
Godard, Jean-Luc 188
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 77, 243
Goggin, James 221
Goldsmith, Kenneth 22–23, 30–31, 37n, 38n, 39n, 107, 109, 123, 125–126, 131–133, 220, 224n, 284, 288–289
Gombrich, Ernst 60
Google 94, 106–107, 113, 123, 133, 203, 208, 230, 234–235, 296
Gordon, Avery F. 237
Gordon, Melissa 276, 280–281
Goudy, Frederic 76–77
GPDF Editions 106, 109n
Greaney, Patrick 207
Gribkov, Vitaliy 166–167
Gross, Lukas 107
Guattari, Felix 132
Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich 83, 188
Gumilëv, Nikolay 159, 163
Gutenberg, Johannes 135

Habermas, Jürgen 39n, 264
Habicht, Dejan 207
Hackenschmidt, Sebastian 207
Haeckel, Ernst 139
Hänsgen, Sabine 164
Handler, Ben Lee Ritchie 207
Hantelmann, Dorothea von 23, 124–125, 129–130
Harney, Stefano 247
Hatje Cantz 209
Hayden, Bill 207
Hayles, N. Katherine 82–83, 285
Heidegger, Martin 104
Hein, Constanze 7–8
Hendricks, John 59

Higgins, Dick 16, 41–42, 45, 48–49
Hogarth Press 41
Holten, John 207
Horkheimer, Max 264
Horvitz, David 207
Houellebecq, Michel 230
Huebler, Douglas 108
Huff, Jason 112–113
Hugnet, Georges 41
Husserl, Edmund 103

Icon Group International 96
Infante, Francisco 168
Information as Material 38n, 297
Inge, M. Thomas 119
Iskander, Fazil' 161, 163

James, Henry 64, 66n
Jancou, Marc 276
Jarry, Alfred 65
Jean Paul 66
Jennings, Lois 251
Jobs, Steve 260
Joensuu, Juri 126
John Paul II 227
Johnson, B. S. 18
Johnstone, John 142
Joseph, Chris 123
Joubert, Joseph 64
Jouet, Jacques 63, 65, 72
JSTOR 25, 231

Kabakov, Ilya 168
Kant, Immanuel 57
Kapielski, Thomas 209
Kaprow, Allan 50
Käsmayr, Sarah 264–265, 268–271
Katz, Elizabeth 257
Keller, Christoph 207
Keller, Jean 21, 114, 115, 221
Kelmscott Press 41
Kenner, Hugh 92n
Kennon, Brian 207
Kerner, Justinus 303
Kerouac, Jack 107, 125
Key, Gandha 207
Khardzhiev, Nikolay 161, 163
Kidd, Chip 81, 87
Kiepenheuer & Witsch 265
Kindle 112
Kinmont, Ben 54
Kirschenbaum, Matthew 105
Kittler, Friedrich 83
Kizeval'ter, Georgiy 167, 169
Kleon, Austin 122
Knopf, Alfred A. 75, 77–78, 79n, 80–81, 83–84, 86
Koenigs, Tom 265–266
Kollektivnye deystviya 166
Komar, Vitaliy 169n
Kosuth, Joseph 122, 168n
Kozlov, Nikolay 168
Kretschmer, Hubert 192, 207
Kriemann, Susanne 303
Kruchënykh, Aleksey 161

Kublanovsky, Yury 161, 163
Kuckahn, T. S. 152n
Küng, Moritz 202
Kuusela, Hanna 12, 20, 22–25, 57n, 296

La Bibliotheque Fantastique (LBF) 53–57, 60, 61n, 125, 215, 296
Lacan, Jacques 96n
Lamarck, Jean-Baptiste de 144
Lambert, Steve 228
Lamberty, Tom 207
Lash, Scott 132
Latour, Bruno 110
Lautréamont 65
Lažetić, Tanja 207
Lebeer-Hossmann, Irmelin 46
Lefebvre, Antoine 9, 13, 19, 36n, 123, 125, 215–216, 223n, 296
Le Gac, Jean 46
Lévinas, Emmanuel 188
LeWitt, Sol 157, 201
Lianozovo Group 173
Lichtenstein, Hinrich 144
Linker, Kate 59
Linnaeus, Carl 139, 144–147
Lispector, Clarice 241
Little Free Libraries 235
Locke, John 141
Long, Gareth 207
Longabucco, Matt 27, 296
Lorusso, Silvio 21, 221–223, 225n
Louro, Helena 207
Ludovico, Alessandro 9, 25, 27, 34, 39n, 102–103, 273, 296
Luhmann, Niklas 81
Lukács, Georg 264
Lulu 101–102, 105–107, 108n, 110, 112, 114–115, 221–222, 225n
Lyotard, Jean-François 105n

Maciunas, George 60
MacKillop, Sara 207
Makharevich, Igor' 168
Malamud, Carl 231
Maldonado, Juan Francisco 240
Malevich, Kazimir 161
Malik, Rachel 10–11, 19, 38n, 212
Mallarmé, Stéphane 19, 21, 38n, 57, 224n
Mandel'shtam, Nadezhda and Osip 161
MANI (Moscow Archive of New Art) 34, 167–169, 173–174, 177
Mann, Thomas 66n
Manning, Bradley 231
Maranda, Michael 207
Marcus, Leah S. 289
Marcuse, Herbert 264
Mars, Marcell 273–274
Martial 229
Martin du Gard, Roger 71
Martinet, François-Nicolas 147–150
März Verlag 265
Matisse, Henri 71
Mattern, Shannon 260, 261n
Mauduyt, Pierre-Jean Etienne 147
Mayer, Hansjörg 42, 50
McCarney, Scott 207
McGann, Jerome 10, 27, 83
McLaughlin, Steve 105, 109–111
McLuhan, Marshall 38n, 93, 234, 303
Melamid, Aleksandr 167, 169n
Melgard, Holly 21, 105, 107, 114–115
Melkane, Lucas W. 29–30, 36n, 224n, 296
memoryoftheworld.org 34, 273
Mendelsund, Peter 86–87
Mercier, Pascal 67n
Metternich, Klemens Wenzel Prince of 198
Merve Verlag 202, 211, 213, 265
Mez Breeze 109
Millar, John Douglas 91
Mills, Stuart 44
Mitchell, Dan 207
Mod, Craig 12
Mœglin-Delcroix, Anne 13, 16–17, 36n, 48n, 157n, 168n, 296–297
Moineau, Jean-Claude 54
Moisdon, Stéphanie 119
Møller, Lasse Krog 207
Mollet-Vieville, Ghislain 54
Monastyrskiy, Andrey 166, 174n, 177, 297n
Monk, Jonathan 207
Moore, Barbara 45, 48–49, 59
Moreau, Antoine 61n
Morris, Simon 125, 207
Morris, William 41, 50
Mortensen, Audun 207
Moten, Fred 247
Mueller, Kristin 7, 241, 247
Mukhomory 166–167, 174
Müller, Ariane 207
Müller, Lothar 10
Müller-Wille, Staffan 145
Multiple Stores 219
Murakami, Haruki 81
Murray, Simone 37n

Nabokov, Vladimir 67n, 68, 158
Nannucci, Maurizio 41–44, 47
National Excelsior Press 254
Nekrasov, Vsevolod 173
Nicolai, Olaf 207
Nietzsche, Friedrich 287–288
NO-ISBN 26–27, 29, 31, 34, 192, 194, 196–200, 202–203, 224n, 296
Noland, Cady 275–276
NOOK Press 101n
Noterdaeme, Filip 54
Noury, Aurélie 12, 21–22, 36n, 207, 297
Novakovskiy, Aleksandr 161
Nuotio, Sampsa 123
Obama, Barack 228
O'Brien, Geoffrey 238–239
Obrist, Hans Ulrich 107, 119, 193, 195
O'Doherty, Brian 21, 211, 213
Olenhusen, Götz von 264–265, 267–268
Omaheimo, Raisa 123
O'Neill, Paul 120–121, 123–124
Orlaineta, Edgar 207
Orlov, Boris 168
Osborne, Peter 207
Other Books and So 16, 241
Ourshelves 235

PAB 41
Packer, George 263
Panofsky, Erwin 51
Pantheon 81, 83–84, 86, 87n
Paraguay Press 249n
Parikka, Jussi 289
Parisi, Valentina 25, 27–28, 34, 174n, 297
Parker, Philip M. 96n
Pastor Zond editions 169, 174–175, 180, 297
Paterson, Katie 30, 283–292, 294n
Pautler, Pierre 222
Peale, Charles Willson 150
Perec, Georges 67–69, 260n
Perjovschi, Dan 207
Perloff, Marjorie 123, 126
Petrov, Vladimir 166–167
Petsopoulos, Stavros 207
Pfeiffer, Claudio 207
Phaidon 209
Picabia, Francis 67
Pichler, Michalis 16, 27, 36n, 208, 297
Pigafetta, Antonio 137
Pilekjær, Philip 188
Piracy Collection / Piracy Project 251, 264, 274–275, 297
Place, Vanessa 20, 38n, 207, 217
Platonov, Andrei 158
Pliny the Elder 137
Poe, Edgar Allan 66n
Pogačar, Tadej 207
Poirtras, Laura 203n
Popov, Yevgeniy 161, 163
Porteous, Susan 207
Posada, Priscilla 297
Prelinger, Megan Shaw 261
Pressman, Jessica 83, 286, 291
Prigov, Dmitriy Aleksandrovich 164–165, 167
Prince 200
Prince, Richard 125, 209
Pross, Harry 82
Proust, Marcel 65
Public Library 273
Public School 273–274
Publication Studio 24, 27, 54
Public.Resource.Org 231
Puech, Jean-Benoît 67n
Pullinger, Kate 123

Queneau, Raymond 18

Rancière, Jacques 237, 246
Réaumur, René Antoine Ferchault de 146–148
Reckwitz, Andreas 8
Recorthings 44
Reich, Steve 188
Reich, Wilhelm 264–267, 271
Relph, Nick 207
Renan, Ernest 65
Renoir, Pierre-Auguste 188
Reutersward, Carl Fredrik 303
Revolting Librarians 25, 252–253, 257
Richter, Ann 297, 303
Riegl, Alois 51
Rifkin, Jeremy 38n, 96n
Rigaut, Jacques 64
Rinne, Cia 207
Robbe-Grillet, Alain 30, 39n, 185, 188
Rogers, Bruce 76
Römer, Stefan 207
Roshal', Mikhail 168
Roth, Dieter 41–44, 201
Roussel, Raymond 63, 66n
Rubinshteyn, Lev 165–166, 168
Ruffel, Lionel 39n
Ruscha, Edward 41, 43, 201, 251, 254, 264, 275–276, 303

Saint-Hilaire, Geoffroy 144
Salon für Kunstbuch 192–193, 296
Sample, Mark 286
Sanders, Jeremy 207
Sarmiento, Sergio Muñoz 276
Sartre, Jean-Paul 69
Scherübel, Klaus 21, 224n
Schlegel, Friedrich 77
Schlegell, Mark von 202
Schmid, Joachim 214
Schmitz, Martin 207
Schraenen, Guy 59
Schramm, Roman 207
Schulze, Gerhard 130
Schuster, Stefan 207
Senior, David 252, 256, 260, 262
Sérandour, Yann 207
Shaffer, Travis 207
Sharp, Willoughby 207
Sheshivari, Izet 207
Siegelaub, Seth 124, 135, 157, 207
Sigov, Sergey 161
Silliman, Ron 132
Sinyavskiy, Andrey 156
Skersis, Viktor 168–169, 174, 297
Sloterdijk, Peter 209
Smith, William Henry 196
Smithson, Robert 211
Snowden, Edward 203n, 231
Sollfrank, Cornelia 274
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr 158
Something Else Press 16, 42, 45, 48–50
Soulellis, Paul 22, 26, 37n, 125
Sowden, Tom 207
Spary, Emma C. 136, 147
Springer, Anna-Sophie 22–23, 151n, 152n, 253, 259, 297
Stadler, Matthew 24, 26, 39n, 54, 61
Stankowski, Jochen 213
Starre, Alexander 12, 18, 38n, 297
Steinbrecher, Erik 207
Steinweg, Marcus 207
Stern, David G. 8
Sterne, Laurence 18, 303
Stezaker, John 207
Stiegler, Bernard 82, 92n
Stilinović, Mladen 207
Stipančić, Branka 207
Stowe, Harriet Beecher 66
Stresemann, Erwin 137, 139
Stylianidou, Vassiliea 207
Sullivan, Derek 207
Swartz, Aaron 25, 132, 231
Syjuco, Stephanie 101–102, 105
Sylvester, Chris 106
SZ 168

Tarasque Press 44
Tarkovsky, Andrei 243
Tarshis, Anna 161
Temporary Services 207
temporary travelling press publications 42, 47
Terburg, Aimée 207
Terz, Abram 156
The Yes Men 228
Theewen, Gerhard 207
Thompson, Carolyn 207
Thurston, Nick 9, 19–20, 22, 24–25, 36n–38n, 97n, 123, 130–131, 133, 207, 223n, 297
Tishkov, Leonid 168
Tonnard, Elisabeth 21, 31, 214, 220
Traumawien 105, 107–109, 113, 230
Tret'iakov, Sergei 113
Troll Thread 26, 102, 105–109, 111–112, 114
Truck Books 105n
Tsvetaeva, Marina 159
Tsvetkov, Valentin Fedorovich 159
Tumblr 106–107, 199
Turchinskiy, Lev Mikhaylovich 158, 160
Turing, Alan 196
Turpin, Etienne 259
Twitter 93, 95, 111, 126, 293n

UBERMORGEN.COM 25, 273
UbuWeb 16, 125
Underground Press Syndicate 159
Unpublishable Series 16
Vaché, Jacques 64
Vale, V. 207
Valinsky, Rachel 27, 297
VanessaPlace Inc. 38n, 217
Vanity Press 219–220, 224n
Vasil'ev, Oleg 168
Verlag 42
Viallat, Claude 60
Vila-Matas, Enrique 67
Vilayphiou, Stéphanie 229–230
Vodjdani, Isabelle 61n
vries, herman de 41–43, 47

Wallace, Alfred Russel 137, 151n
Walls and Space 188
Warburg, Aby 142, 145, 152n, 243
Warhol, Andy 201, 227
Wark, McKenzie 95n
Wattpad 285
Wedgepress & Cheese 42
Weichbrodt, Gregor 105, 107, 110–111
Weiner, Lawrence 211
Weinmayr, Eva 9, 24–27, 30, 34, 36n, 207, 225, 264n, 297
Wells, H.G. 78
Wendy's Subway 27, 237, 296–297
Wenzel, Jan 207
Wershler, Darren 38n, 130
West, Celeste 253, 257
West, Cornel 247
Whitton, Fiona 273
Whole Earth Catalog 25, 251–252, 254–255
Wiegand, Wayne A. 260
Wikileaks 200, 231
Wikipedia 110–111, 150, 229–230, 235
Wilcock, Rodolfo J. 67n
Wilde, Barbara de 80–81
Willems, Roger 207
Witte, Georg 164
Wittgenstein, Ludwig 113
Wittig, Dale 207
Wojtyła, Karol 227
Wollstonecraft, Mary 243
Woolf, Virginia 41
Workman, Martine 200
Wyse, Dana 54

Yearous-Algozin, Joey 105, 108n, 109, 112–113
Yeremin, Mikhail 166
Yerofeyev, Viktor 161, 163
YouTube 230

Zaccar Offset 45
Zakharov, Vadim 27–28, 36n, 164, 167–169, 297
Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E. 16
Zboya, Eric 207
Zhmud', Leonid 158
Zinov'ev, Aleksandr 158
Zolf, Rachel 123
Zona 44
Zschiegner, Hermann 207

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Here are some sources and references for the cases where we cite external works:
The spread on pages **32–33** refers to Marcel Broodthaers' *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (*A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance*, 1969).
The title on page **40** depicts a variation of Ed Ruscha's *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963).
The black rectangle on page **58**, the marble pages on pages **127–128** and the title on page **206** are designed in reference to the novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–1767) by Laurence Sterne. Marble paper by Studio Pandan.
Page **89** shows a film still from Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012). It depicts Suzy Bishop with one of her favourite books. The books in the film are fictitious, written and designed especially for the movie, and build a story-within-a-story. The still is borrowed from the video *Bibliophilia – Books in the Films of Wes Anderson* (2015) by Luís Azevedo (www.theatozreview.com/2015/06/25/books-in-the-films-of-wes-anderson/). Courtesy: Luís Azevedo.
Pages **116–117** are borrowed from Douglas Coupland's novel *Microserfs* (1995).
The image on page **183** is taken from *Kleksographien* (inkblots, 1890), a collection of poems on inkblots, by Justinus Kerner.
The punctuation image on page **218** stands in the tradition of *Prix Nobel* by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd (1960/66).
The photo on page **262** points to *The Medium Is the Massage* (1967) by the media theorist Marshall McLuhan, designed by Quentin Fiore.
The leaf on page **282** shows a resemblance to an insert by the artist Susanne Kriemann in *Reading Susanne Kriemann* (2011), edited by Hans Dickel and Lisa Puyplat, designed by NODE Berlin.
Page **302** quotes an illustration of Douglas Coupland's *JPod*, which comments on the act of writing—or graphic design and (digital) publishing.

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